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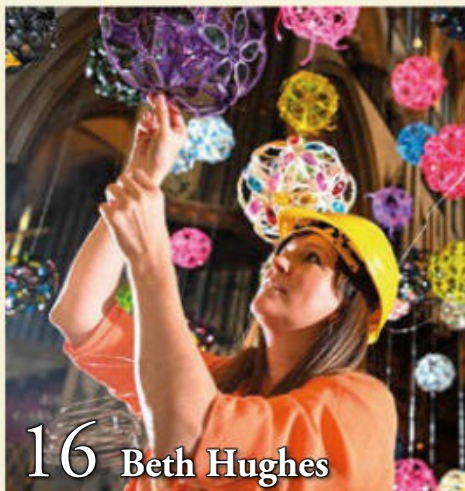
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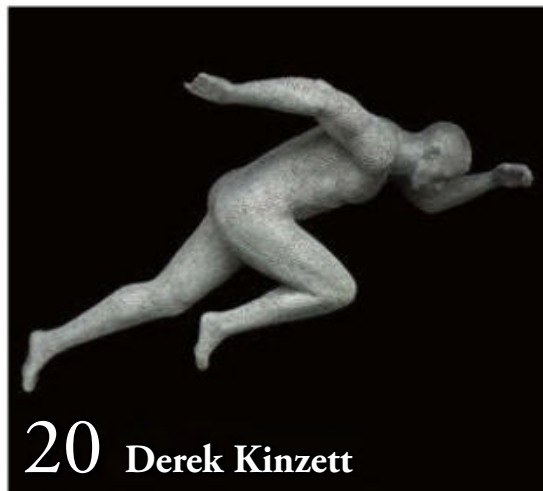
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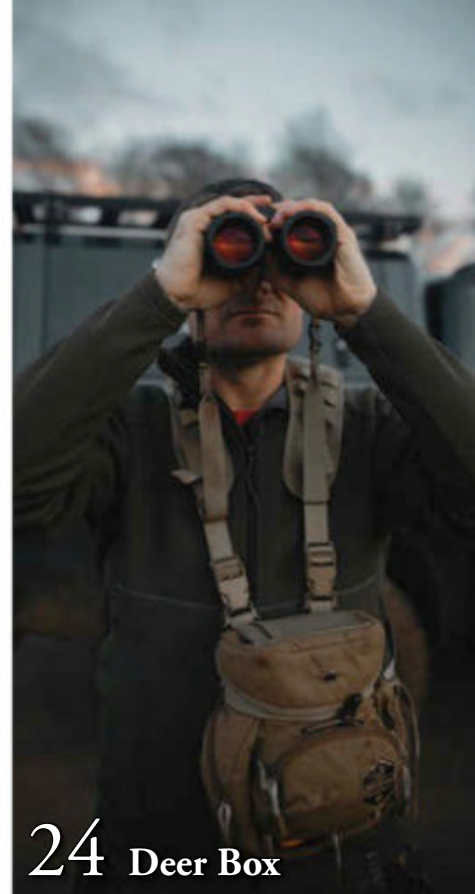
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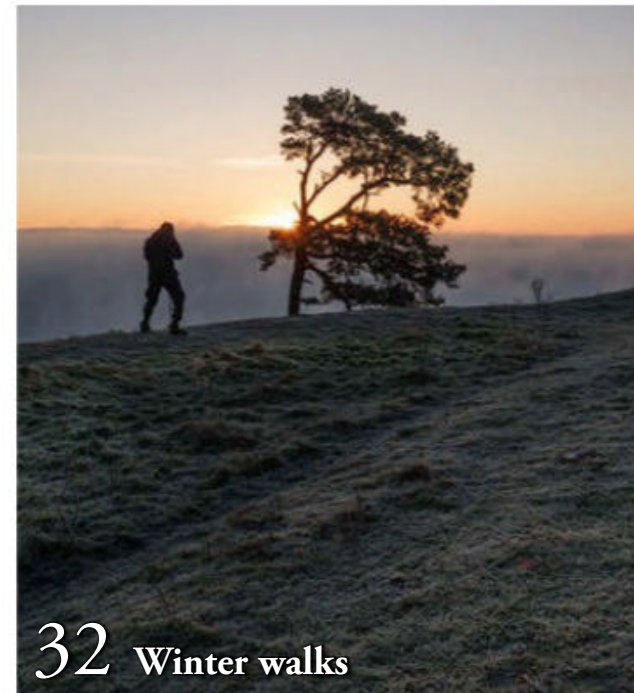
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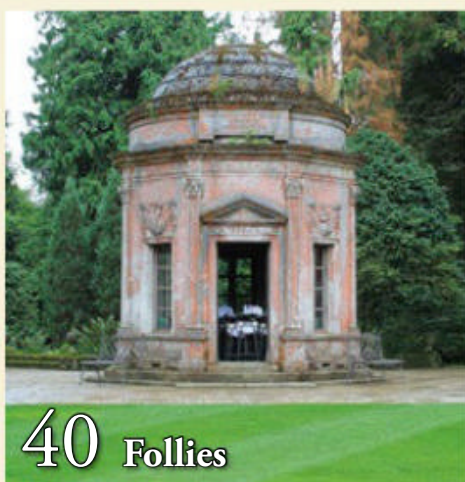
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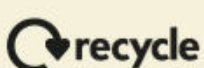
MA Music Leisure & Travel

Part of

Mark Allen

www.markallengroup.com

Wiltshire Life is published by
MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd,
Unit A Buildings 1-5,
Dinton Business Park, Catherine Ford Rd,
Dinton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 5HZ
www.wiltshirelife.co.uk



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ISSN: 1358-0582

Printed by:

Pensord Press Ltd,
Blackwood, NP12 2YA

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Cover: Silbury Hill, Avebury
Image: Phil Selby

A warm welcome for one and all



Georgie Green says across the county libraries, churches and halls are providing a place to find comfort this winter.

AS ONE year comes to an end and a new one begins there is often a sense of let's say goodbye to the past 12 months and start afresh as we head into the next year. Many people will be glad to see the back of 2022 but the impact of the recession will not stay put as it carries through into 2023.

There have been countless times

‘Libraries across Wiltshire are extending a warm welcome’

throughout our history when we have stepped into the unknown and embraced challenging times.

This is what we are facing in 2023, although those challenges are all too clear and stark. With energy prices at an all-time high, many people are making difficult choices – we have talked about this through the pages of this magazine for some time. But as the cold bites there are places that are opening up across the county preparing to be ‘warm hubs’ – from community centres and churches to libraries and village halls – they are providing a warm welcome and, in most cases, a hot drink and even a slice of cake.

Our libraries are such important facilities, they are no longer buildings where we are told to speak in hushed tones. They

are vibrant spaces where young parents can meet up at a toddler group and at the same time introduce their children to the wonderful world of books and reading.

Libraries also offer free wi-fi and access to daily newspapers, and of course a huge selection of books.

You can reserve books in advance – perfect for anyone who is in a book club as it can get quite costly buying a new book each time you meet up.

If you are having difficulty getting to grips with a smart phone or baffled by technology, perhaps you want to research into the past of your house then your local library is the place to go, and many offer courses.

Libraries across Wiltshire are also extending a warm welcome to all this winter and providing a range of help, support, advice and comfort to people who may be struggling, or want tips to help with the rising cost of living.

If you head to the Wiltshire libraries website this is what they are offering over the coming winter months:

- A free warm space to sit, stay and take part in activities.
- Hot drinks, where possible.
- Warm packs (including a blanket, hot water bottle and a thermal mug) for anyone who would benefit from some free essentials.
- Basic energy advice in all but their smallest libraries and referrals to the energy advisors at Warm Safe Wiltshire.
- Signposting to community partners and agencies that can support people through the cost-of-living crisis.



To discover more about the warm spaces that are opening up across the county, there is a useful website, where you can get advice. If you have an elderly neighbour or know of a family who you think may need support, then head to this website: www.warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk.

There are also ways to help and support people here in the county, you can discover more on page 36 where we have a feature about the Wiltshire Community Foundation Cost of Living Crisis Appeal. Gary Lawrence has spoken to many of the grassroots groups across Swindon and Wiltshire who are working to provide assistance and advice.

To find out more about all the wide-ranging services offered at our libraries, then here is a link to their website:

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/librarylocations.

If you haven't done so already then why not pay a visit to your local library in the coming year.

Maybe before you go, check you haven't got any books that should have been returned from a visit in 1974...

Happy New Year to you and your families from us all at *Wiltshire Life*. 

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A round-up of the best events in January

From pantomime and prehistoric Japan to a festival and live-music.

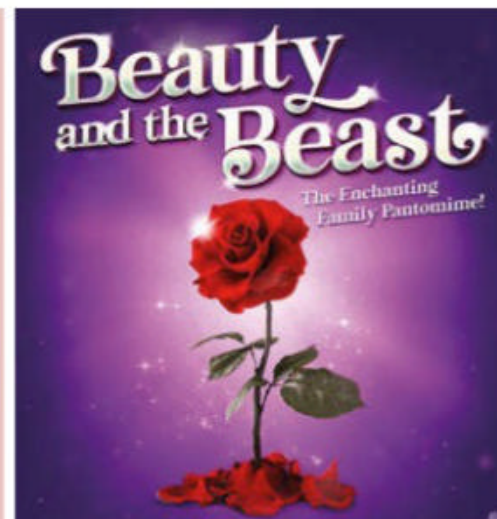
This Month

CIRCLES OF STONE
STONEHENGE VISITOR CENTRE
Stonehenge and Prehistoric Japan celebrates this rich culture. Through a number of exquisite objects, some seen for the first time outside of Japan.
www.english-heritage.org.uk/circles-of-stone



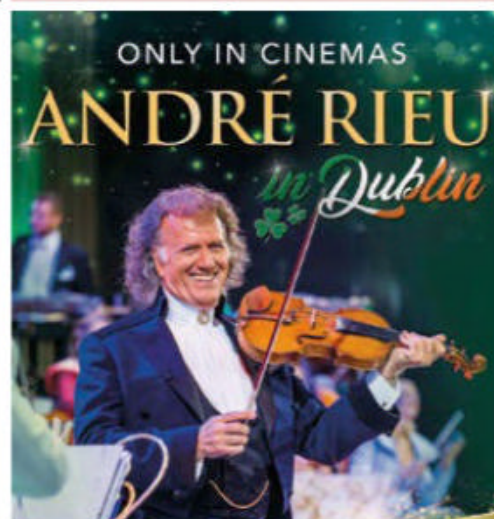
Runs until 2nd

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
THE WYVERN THEATRE
SWINDON
This enchanting family pantomime stars Anne Hegerty from ITV's *The Chase*, as Fairy Flutterby.
www.swindontheatres.co.uk



Runs until 8th

CINDERELLA
SALISBURY PLAYHOUSE
A show packed with songs to sing along to, plenty of adventure, sparkle and laughs (for youngsters and their grown ups) with this rags to riches tale.
www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk

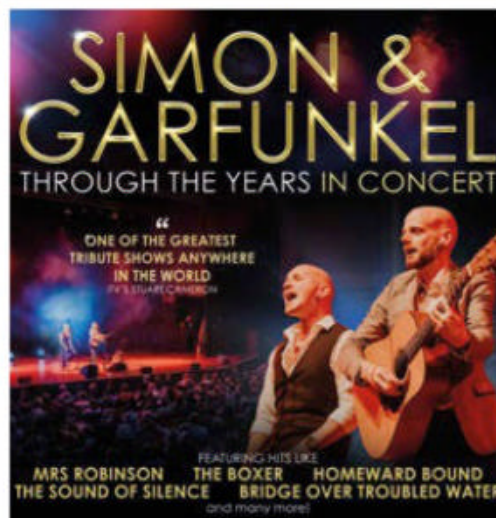


7th

SCREENING: ANDRÉ RIEU IN DUBLIN
ODEON CINEMA TROWBRIDGE
An evening of music and dance on the big screen. André and his Johann Strauss Orchestra. For details of screenings in the county
www.andreincinemas.com

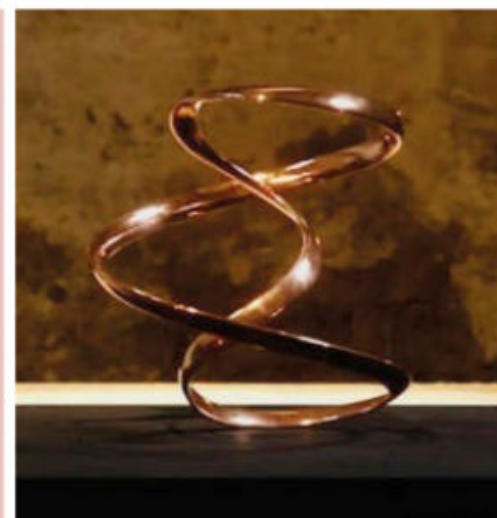
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SIMON & GARFUNKEL THROUGH THE YEARS
NEELD COMMUNITY & ARTS CENTRE, CHIPPENHAM
Critically acclaimed as one of the world's greatest tribute shows. Stunning vocals and harmonies.
www.neeld.co.uk



21st

WONDER WITH TOM LAWTON AND WILL LAWTON
THE POUND ARTS CENTRE, CORSHAM
Immersive live soundscape with Tom Lawton's kinetic sculpture music by Will Lawton
www.poundarts.org.uk



25th

ELÉGIE - RACHMANINOFF - A HEART IN EXILE
SALISBURY PLAYHOUSE
Pianist Lucy Parham has created a new programme. Elégie chronicles the life of Sergei Rachmaninoff.
www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk



21st

BRADFORD ROOTS MUSIC FESTIVAL DAY
WILTSHIRE MUSIC CENTRE, BRADFORD ON AVON
The iconic winter festival returns. The Centre will be filled with music as well as workshops.
www.wiltshiremusic.org.uk

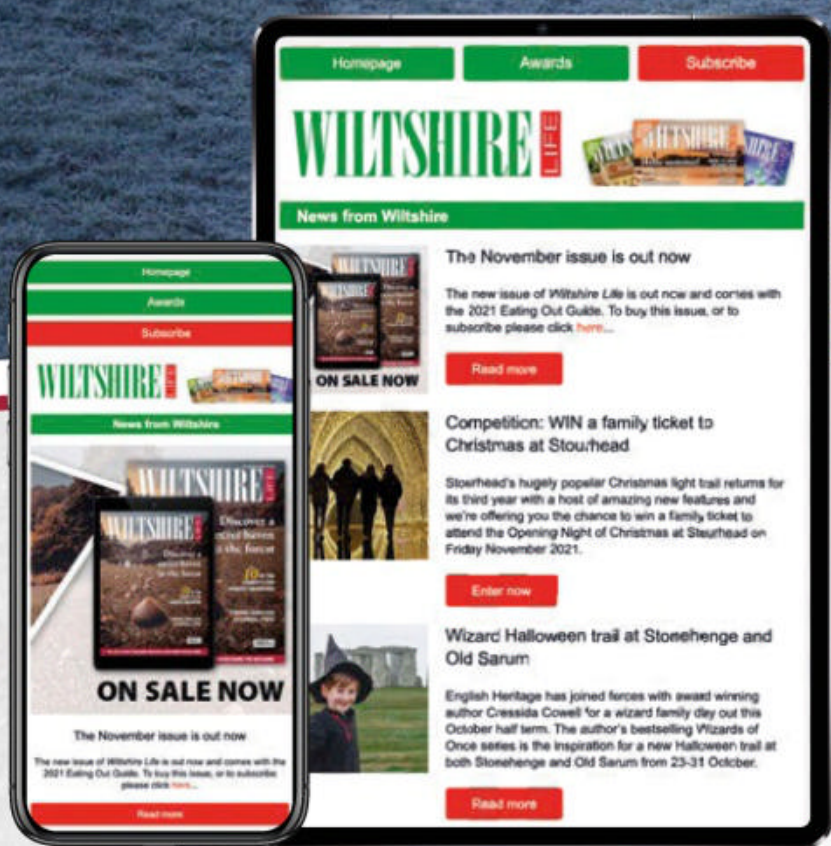
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AROUND THE COUNTY



MAX WILLCOCK

Thousands flock to Salisbury Cathedral

More than 4,000 people attended the three spectacular Advent processions, From Darkness to Light at Salisbury Cathedral.

Regarded by many as the un-missable prelude to the festive season, each service traditionally begins in total darkness and absolute silence, broken only when the Advent Candle is lit and a solo voice rings out across the ancient space.

During each service, two colourful processions made up of more than a hundred people, including the Bishop

The candelight procession.

of Salisbury, Dean of Salisbury, cathedral canons, and 40-strong Cathedral Choir made their way around the ancient building and candles are lit in their wake.

Worship ended in blaze of colour and light as the processions came together and make their way from the High Altar to the west end during the final congregational hymn, with the medieval space glowing in the light of 1,300 flickering candles, and the Prisoners of Conscience window illuminated and gloriously blue at the east end.



Left to right: Warren Webster, Dr. Andrew Murrison, Major General Richard Clements CBE, Allan Thomson and Richard Collinge.

Joint response for health

A new health centre is set to provide support for both military and civilian communities.

The official opening of Larkhill Medical and Dental Centre heralds the first joint Ministry of Defence (MOD) and NHS primary healthcare facility in the county.

Within the new centre there are two GP practices MOD and NHS with consulting and treatment rooms. Each practice has a dispensary, also within the building is a dental centre.

Minister for defence personnel, veterans and service families Dr. Andrew Murrison,

who opened the centre, said: "It is truly state-of-the-art. Delivered under the successful Army Basing Programme, it rightly provides the very best primary care facilities and is a model for Defence-NHS co-operation."

Commander defence primary healthcare, Brigadier Phil Carter said: "The commitment to provide top quality treatment and support for those under our care is epitomised in the Larkhill facility, cementing Wiltshire's position as a hub for future military healthcare services."

New roles for county friends

Camilla, the Queen Consort, has ended the centuries old tradition of having ladies-in-waiting, but instead will be helped by "Queen's companions".

Taking on these new roles are two of her long-standing and trusted friends, the Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire Sarah Troughton, and the High Sheriff of Wiltshire Fiona, the Marchioness of Lansdowne.

These honorary positions involve helping the Queen Consort at public events supporting the Queen Consort at official engagements.



Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire Sarah Troughton and Lady Fiona Lansdowne.

Firm shows its heart for teen on transplant list

Throughout September, online furniture retailer Furniturebox UK donated £10 from every single order they received to the Royal Papworth Hospital charity. At the end of the month, they were thrilled to have raised £14,330, not least because one employee's daughter is currently awaiting a heart and lung transplant.

Lisa is Furniturebox's accounts manager. In March 2022, her 16-year-old stepdaughter suddenly suffered complete heart failure. Until that point, Freya had been a healthy and active preparing for her GCSEs

Monty (left) and Dan (right) with Freya, her father Ken and a member of the Papworth nursing team.

in Salisbury, but she was very suddenly in a life-threatening situation. After being placed in an induced coma, she was transferred to Royal Papworth. Then, after lots of care and plenty of determination on Freya's part, she was finally well enough to be placed on the organ transplant list in July for a heart and both lungs.

She is still waiting.

Lisa says: "The day Freya was told she was finally well enough to go on the transplant list, she should have been going to her prom, so the nurses surprised her with lots of different dresses and tiaras to choose from. They really do go above and beyond for her. Signing the paperwork for two new organs and a virtual prom all in one day."



Fayre raises record amount

This year's Berwick St John Country Fayre raised the largest amount of money in its 30-year history.

Organisers revealed a whopping £63,117.18 had been raised for the Salisbury District Hospital Stars Appeal when they presented the funds at a special event in a packed-out village hall. The two-day event, which took place in September featured rural crafts, tractors, full size and miniature steam engines, classic cars, horses, the famous beer and tea tents, along with many other attractions and was attended by tens of thousands of people.

Berwick St John Country Fayre co-chair Richard Pocock said: "Words can't describe the feeling of what has been achieved. It's been a team effort. It is mind blowing."

Fellow co-chair Gerald Mundy added: "A lot of work goes on behind the scenes but when we get the support and results like this it makes it so

Above: Presenting the cheque to the Stars Appeal team.

worthwhile, the Stars Appeal supports everybody," he added.

Guest speakers at the presentation event included 12-year-old Florence Burgess, who was treated at Salisbury Hospital after being diagnosed with a rare form of leukaemia at the age of eight. She shared her personal experience of how the Stars Appeal made a difference to both her and her family during her long stays in hospital by providing accommodation for her parents, fun play activities and free wi-fi.

The Fayre returns in September 2024. To date it and associated events have raised more than £310,00

Other events for 2023 including a tractor road run across Salisbury Plain in

• www.berwickstjohncountryfayre.co.uk or Facebook and Instagram

Snapping up a winner

The widow of a Salisbury Army veteran has won a competition to have her stunning photography featured in Help for Heroes' new 2023 calendar.

Tanya Warren, 57, is one of six amateur photographers from the Armed Forces community to have her talents showcased in the calendar, which celebrates the great outdoors.

Her photo, which features in the month of December, captures Highland cattle on a crisp morning at River Bourne Community Farm in Laverstock.

"I was a carer for my husband, Bill, after he was diagnosed with bowel cancer, he reached out to other charities, but Help for Heroes

was the only one that could offer emotional support," she said.

Bill received counselling and Tanya was introduced to its fellowship events, including gardening workshops, a respite weekend, and the photography courses.

Tania explains: "During the pandemic, I signed up to the Help for Heroes online photography courses. These courses have been a lifeline – I've met some amazing people on the way, learnt new skills and developed a new hobby which I'm passionate about."

"When I found out that my image would be part of the 2023 calendar I was over the moon. I



can't wait for other people to enjoy the calendar."

Help for Heroes' launched photography courses during lockdown to help veterans in their recovery through fighting social isolation, providing a routine and generating a sense of pride and achievement.

The virtual and face-to-face meet-ups with professional photographer Siorna Ashby,



Left: Tanya with her late husband Bill and her winning image.

have taught hundreds of veterans and their families to improve their picture-taking skills, whether they are using a camera or a mobile phone.

• For more information visit: www.helpforheroes.org.uk



GREEN

Ian Thorn

When Ian Thorn moved to Wiltshire he discovered a county of contrasts and welcoming communities.

I'M A relative newcomer to Wiltshire. My first genuine experience after leaving Bath was to move to Bradford on Avon. Remarkable architecture and history. One of Wiltshire's most beautiful towns and of course home to the Wiltshire Music Centre where I am a trustee.

I never fail to be impressed by the remarkable music making and the range of communities the Music Centre serves. Perhaps my greatest memory was a performance of Henry Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* involving a remarkable group of the Centre's Zone Club members and professional musicians from the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Wow, what a remarkable and emotional performance. Living in Bradford on Avon coincided with baby number two, Evie, and regularly having to deal with a baby, a buggy and the town bridge. Great memories of school concerts, assemblies and excellent teachers at Christchurch School.

After some time in Bradford, I moved to Calne. Having been a Wiltshire councillor in Bradford on Avon, I was elected to represent Calne Central. Calne has a wonderful history. From wool weaving in the 18th century to Wiltshire pork in the 19th and 20th centuries, many wonderful, listed buildings and of course, Dr Joseph Priestley. A chemist, theologian a member of the enlightenment. He discovered oxygen and nine other gases but perhaps his greatest achievement was the invention of carbonated water. So next time you're enjoying a gin and tonic, you can thank Calne for the tonic, at least. Sadly, the idea didn't earn Dr Priestley any money. That opportunity was taken up by a certain Mr Schweppe and the rest is history.

No one can doubt the enormous challenges of the pandemic. One of my regular tasks as a councillor was to telephone elderly residents to check how they were doing. I never failed to be amazed by the support they were receiving from friends, neighbours, and family to help with shopping, picking up prescriptions and checking they were okay. I know this generosity of spirit was repeated over and over in every community in Wiltshire, but I could not help but be touched by the generosity of the people of Calne. The carnival, fireworks night, fantastic Christmas lights, the lantern parade and the music and arts festival reflect the wonder sense of community in the town.

Becoming group leader at County Hall has

taken me to most parts of the county. Many, many trips to Salisbury and journeys across the plain, including a morning observing, or trying to, the famous bustards. There have been meetings and campaigning too in Devizes and Marlborough and in the north and west of the county. Such a variety of landscapes, history but always warm and engaging people.

One of my regular haunts is the council chamber at County Hall in Trowbridge. A distinguished building completed in 1940 and designed by Philip Hepworth. I have spent many happy hours debating the issues of the day, many affecting the lives of Wiltshire's residents – not least each year's inevitable increase in the council tax. The members of the council reflect many aspects of Wiltshire life. Our proud military history, our farming communities, small business owners to name a few. Debate is always passionate and lively, and we agree on far more than we disagree.

Being a councillor has also given me the chance to discover the breadth and depth of our communities. As a trustee of Marden House in Calne, a vital community centre in the town, one can understand the value of spaces for community groups. The venue welcomes couples getting married, voters, casting their voters and many local groups. I'm also a trustee of Wiltshire Victoria County History, the county's wonderful social history publication and at Wiltshire Rural Music who enable communities to engage in music making.

Away from everything else one of the best ways to really understand Wiltshire is to take our dog Daisy for a walk. Trips to Oliver's Castle; heady views of Devizes and the patchwork of fields as well as an eerie sense of history as you walk in the footsteps of Parliamentary and Royalist soldiers. Walks to Yatesbury and remarkable views of Windmill Hill and the ghostly outline of the former World War Two airfield where Guy Gibson of *The Dam Busters* fame learnt to fly or the canopy of trees providing shelter at Savernake Forest, and finally, a summer's day on the Plain near East Chisenbury with the sound of summer accompanied by the gliders soaring overhead.

Wiltshire has an extraordinary range of landscapes, towns and villages and of course, our city, but above all, as I have learnt what makes Wiltshire really special is the people; their generosity and honesty, their openness and willingness to help each other.

WL

Ian Thorn on The Green in Calne.

William Wyldebore-Smith

Wiltshire's Vice Lord-Lieutenant, William Wyldebore-Smith, stands down this month but, as the 75-year-old tells Gary Lawrence, he has a wealth of work to keep him busy.

IN THE modern world people are working and staying active longer but there are some traditions that hold fast whatever the trend, so this month William Wyldebore-Smith must accede to the march of time and hang up his ceremonial sword as Wiltshire's Vice Lord-Lieutenant.

"You have to stop at 75, that's the rule," he says. "It's been a huge privilege and an honour but I've still got plenty of other things I want to do."

Filling the waking hours has never been a problem for William ever since he was given some sage advice from his first senior partner at a law firm in Bristol. "I'd just been made a partner when Andrew Urquhart, a quite extraordinary man who worked to be philanthropic, came to see me," he recalls.

"He said 'you do need to have some sort of charity thing that you are engaged with', he didn't mean for the good of the firm but for my development as a person and he was quite right."

Putting that into practice has ensured that a great many and varied threads have been woven into a colourful tapestry of a life that presents a warm and vivid picture of a man who has prized his family, community and profession.

Born in Kent, he had his first brush with Wiltshire when he was educated at Marlborough College. He studied law and qualified at London firm Theodore Goddard in 1972. He met his wife Prisca, also a lawyer, at a party in Battersea in 1973 but, in his words "it took me a year before she paid me close attention". They were married in December 1974 and shortly after, partly inspired by the grim state of a London besieged by IRA bombs, strikes and economic strife, they moved to Somerset and William's partnership at a Bristol law firm.

He stayed there for 10 years but, finding he was travelling regularly up to London and in search of a school for daughter Phillipa, who was born in 1977, he and Prisca bought a run-down house from the Bowood estate at Bremhill and William found a job at Wiltshire firm Wood & Audrey, which meant less travel and a family practice more to his suiting.

If the job was ideal the house, at that stage anyway, wasn't. "We've probably spent twice

as much on it as we paid for it over the years," says William while recalling a damp winter living in a mobile home in the grounds while renovation work went on. "It was probably like a surveyor's test case – death watch beetle, falling damp, woodworm, rotting timbers, you name it.

"But we've both always wanted to live on a hill and we've both wanted a view like this."

It is a stunning location, looking over miles of countryside and with the Grade I-listed St Michael's church, which has parts dating back to the 12th century, virtually in the back garden.



Right: William Wyldebore-Smith at his home in Bremhill with St Martin's in the background.

In moving there William had no idea that as well as putting down new roots, he was binding them onto much deeper ones that stretch back centuries.

"I discovered I had many connections with Wiltshire. My grandmother was born here – her father was the agent for the Ashe estate at Langley Burrell and she is buried at Tytherton Lucas church," he says.

He also found a family connection to the Danvers family of Dauntsey Park, discovering that Sir John Danvers was a High Sheriff of Wiltshire in 1485 and 1513 – exactly 500 years before his distant grandson William held the same role.

Even more spine-tingling was the revelation that his distant cousin, Lucy Danvers, married MP Sir John Baynton and lived in a much grander manor house that stood exactly on the site of William and Prisca's home until it was burnt down during the Civil War. She died in 1621 and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

"I had a few clues about all of this but I have done some more research on it because I'm fascinated by history," says William. "It is quite nice really to think she lived on this site and two of her children were baptised in St Martin's Church."

'I discovered I had many connections with Wiltshire'

If his family was entrenched in Wiltshire's history, William has ensured it is just as firmly a part of the county's present. He was founding chairman of the North Wiltshire Enterprise Agency, which eventually became Great Western Enterprise. He was also on the board of the Wiltshire and Bath Regional Health Authority for more than 10 years.

He has also been an enthusiastic trustee or an ambassador supporting hard-working staff for Youth Action Wiltshire, Alabare, Julia's House Children's Hospice and Wiltshire Community Foundation, among others. Part of his role with Youth Action Wiltshire was to help steer it into the stewardship of Community First, where alongside fellow youth charities Splash and Young Carers it has flourished. "It's a wonderful charity and my involvement is one of the things I am most pleased about and proud of," he says.

He became an equally familiar face all over the county through his work for Wood & Audrey as a family lawyer and vigorously rejects the assertion that the day to day minutiae of family matters are any less satisfying than the seemingly more glamorous world of big corporate law.



Above: William Wyldebore-Smith on duty with the Bishop of Salisbury Stephen Lake at the inauguration of the new rector of Warminster.

"I enjoy the work because there is such a lot to be involved with," he says. "Families buy and sell businesses and property and there are succession issues and disputes. You can be sitting down with them looking at their strategy for expansion and you are right in the heart of the family enterprise – it is fascinating."

His close involvement and the level of trust that develops has turned clients into firm friends and he has often been the quiet voice of reason when family relations sour. "Trying to avoid things becoming bitter was the main thing," he says. "Many times I've said 'come on you'll have to talk to each other when this is all over so let's sort it all out'."

"It's often a question of getting people individually to tell you what they actually want and then overlaying that with what other people want and you then realise it's actually quite little things they are all after."

His term as High Sheriff in 2013 prompted an interest in the rising number of people going into prison and how to alleviate it. By talking to professionals in the police, probation and prison service he came to realise that steering young people on the right path as early as possible is the answer.

"Young people are everything, if we don't look out for them, particularly those who make up the third of young people who don't get GCSEs, then they are lost," he says. "They are probably capable but because of life's chances and their situation, things haven't worked out for them. It probably didn't work out for their parents or their grandparents either."

This conviction led Prisca to gather a team of volunteers, including William, to read with pupils at Alton Close Primary School in Penhill, Swindon on afternoons for five years until Covid came along.

"Oh golly we learnt a lot," he recalls of the young people. "They don't talk very easily for a time but then gradually out it comes and you hear about them being in families of eight, ten or 12. And there are no books at home."

"Many of the children clearly had ability but some of them had problems and we discovered a bit about special needs. It is the most rewarding task Prisca and I have done."



The interest in special needs education continued when, in 2015, he became the first chairman of trustees at Swindon's Brunel Academies Trust, which oversees Uplands, Brimble Hill, Chalet and Churchward special schools and Horizons College. "We are now expanding into mainstream in order to really deliver the inclusion," he says.

Ironically his first grandchild Ralph was born with severe learning difficulties and autism a long while after he became involved at Brunel and he and Prisca were able to use the knowledge they had acquired to be very hands-on grandparents. Ralph is now a pupil at Uplands.

He took on the "immense honour" of Vice Lord-Lieutenant support Lord-Lieutenant Sarah Troughton in 2019. "To be the number

two representative of the Royal family in the county is wonderful," he says. "I've had the privilege of being presented to The Queen when she came to the Diamond Jubilee celebration in Salisbury. That laser beam smile – wow, it was like rocket fuel."

He says he has enjoyed supporting Mrs Troughton and representing her in a myriad of ways, engaging with and celebrating so many aspects of life in the county. "It is so heart-warming to find out how so many people give time and effort to make life better for others, whether in public service or in their communities," he says.

Once the sword has been sheathed for the final time he'll occupy himself with the chairmanship at the Brunel, his vice-presidency of Community First and perhaps

Above: William and Prisca Wyldebore-Smith at home in front of a portrait of themselves with daughter Philippa.

some digging – both in his garden and into his family history. There is also his role as a church warden at St Michael's, which remains handily close to the family home.

"We will be very reluctant to move out of here," he says, looking around his living room and taking in the view beyond the window. "Well, it's only a wheelbarrow ride round to the churchyard and I'm determined to defeat the undertakers."

WL

• Find out more about Community First at communityfirst.org.uk and about the Brunel Academies Trust at brunel.org.uk

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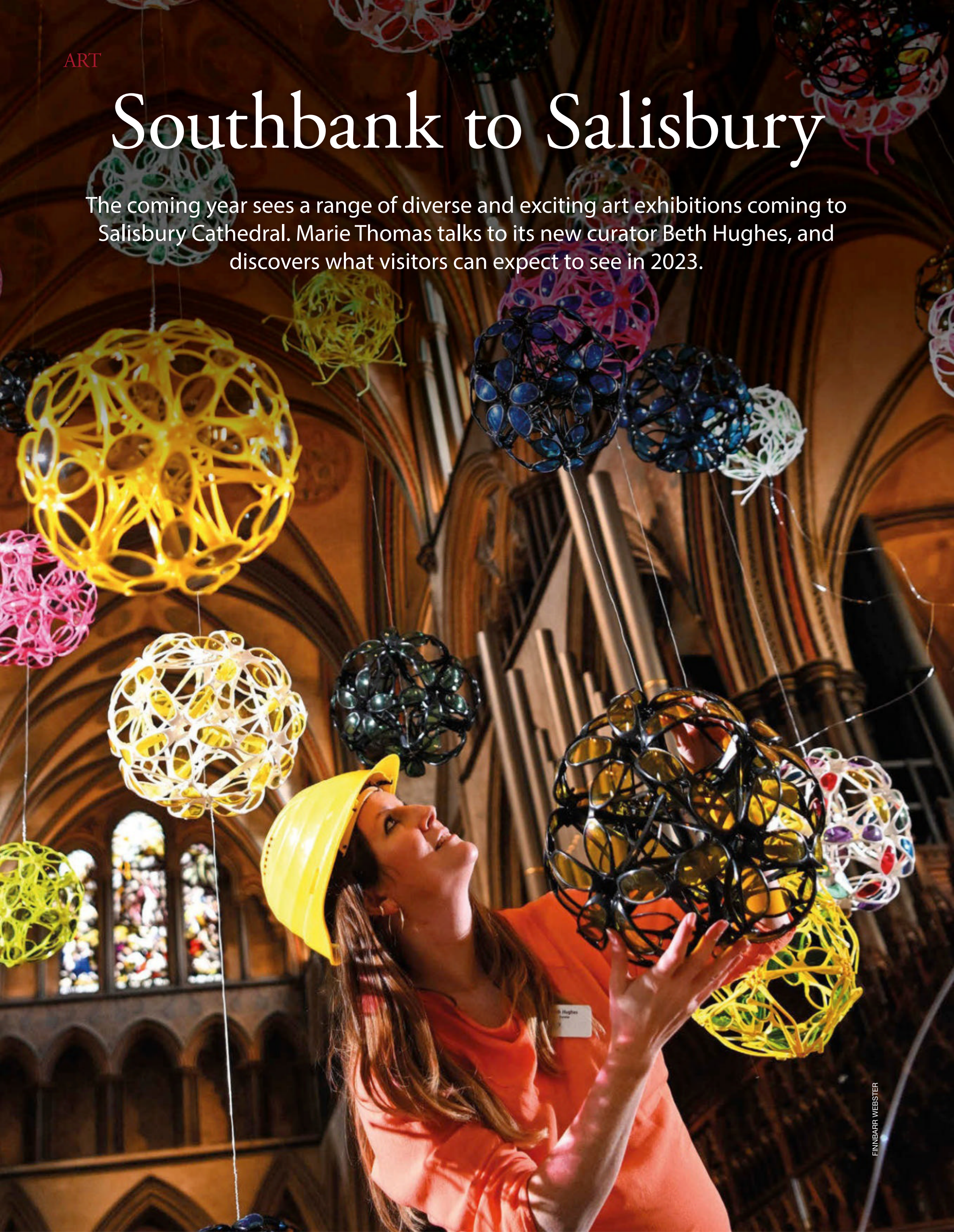


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ART

Southbank to Salisbury

The coming year sees a range of diverse and exciting art exhibitions coming to Salisbury Cathedral. Marie Thomas talks to its new curator Beth Hughes, and discovers what visitors can expect to see in 2023.



MY CURATORIAL practice balances the fundamental belief in the importance and power of art with a dedicated commitment to collaboration and access.”

That’s the view of Beth Hughes, Salisbury Cathedral’s new visual arts curator. Little did she know when she was curating Grayson Perry’s tapestry series *The Vanity of Small Differences* at the cathedral that she was informally auditioning for a new job and a major career shift.

At the time the 37-year-old was working for the Arts Council Collection, a portfolio of 8,000 artworks by more than 2,000 artists established in 1946, and now the most widely circulated national loan collection of modern and contemporary British art. After 15 years of working with publicly-funded art collections Beth had, she thought, found her niche.

That was before she came to Salisbury.

“It was the conversation about why we should show Grayson Perry’s tapestries in the cathedral that got me intrigued” says Beth. “The exhibition signified a change of direction for the cathedral. Grayson isn’t at all reverent in his use of religious art, he uses it within the context of art history, and while his work is spiritual and thoughtful, he is not religious.”

Left: Curator Beth Hughes installing David Batchelor’s *Disco Mécanique*, 2008 in the spire crossing at Salisbury Cathedral.

Below: The completed installation in place at the spire crossing.

The exhibition was a success, attracting a raft of new and younger visitors to the cathedral and securing Beth the job of visual arts curator, a role that will see her installing at least one major group exhibition a year and a myriad of smaller projects.

First off the block is David Batchelor’s solo exhibition, on show in the cathedral at the moment. One of the smaller exhibitions, Batchelor’s show consists of seven pieces ranging from a huge multicoloured galaxy of revolving globes made out of thousands of plastic sunglasses from Brazil called *Disco Mécanique* to the *Concretos*, a series of works inspired by walls in Sicily where shards of coloured glass had been fixed into the mortar on top to deter intruders.

Whilst *Disco Mécanique* flamboyantly fills the spire crossing, the *Concretos* are smaller works, consisting of vibrantly coloured materials embedded into concrete structures.

“I have wanted to work with David for a long time,” explains Beth. “His approach to his practice is refreshingly different; he champions colour, often working with found objects and using leftovers and offcuts, which he transforms into colourful installations”.

“This exhibition was a leap of faith for both of us. His work is most often found in white wall galleries, a complete contrast to the

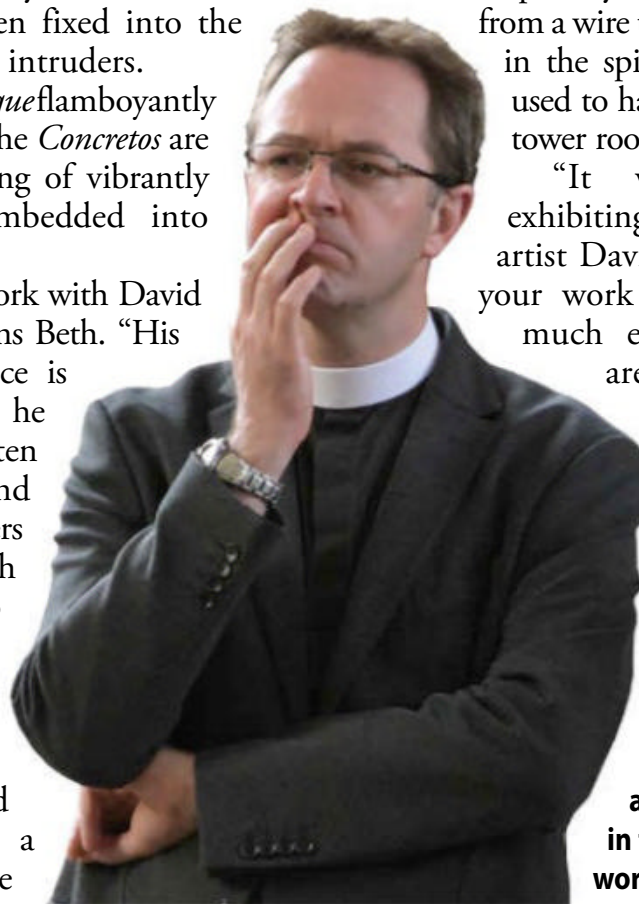
cathedral, and just installing the work was a challenge, given that you can’t use nails or screws. Placing and hanging the work has to be done without impacting on the fabric of the space at all. More challenging than you think”

Those challenges bring out the ingenuity in the curator and installation team. Ecclesiastical joiner, Richard Pike, fashioned huge ‘fake’ walls for Beth when she needed to hang the Perry tapestries, and has cunningly (and invisibly) fixed Batchelor’s *Candela* to a pillar in the north nave aisle. A luminous glow of vividly coloured recycled bottles, *Candela* appears to float in the Gothic gloom, while *Disco Mécanique* hangs on a specially constricted grid suspended from a wire that goes up through a hole in the spire crossing roof originally used to haul work materials into the tower roof spaces.

“It was scary imagining exhibiting in the cathedral,” admits artist David Batchelor. “Envisaging your work in a white space is so much easier. In a gallery you are starting from scratch with your colours, they exist in their own context, but here in the cathedral so much

Left: Canon Kenneth Padley, canon treasurer of Salisbury Cathedral.

Below: Beth Hughes and artist David Batchelor sit in front of *Concretos*, three works from the series.





ANNA KUCERA

more is going on. Light and space have been orchestrated here for more 800 years – you have to work with it, not against it.”

Batchelor’s work resonates with the cathedral’s stained glass and the shifting light and reflections inside the building. It sits comfortably, and unexpectedly, within the space, and what’s more, David’s passion for reusing and repurposing is a perfect embodiment of the cathedral’s ambitious plans to become more environmentally friendly, whether by generating electricity via solar panels on the cloister roof, moving to LED lighting or simply suspending lawn mowing in The Close during May.

‘Like all jobs around here, it’s not one we can ignore’

“We are a long way off perfect,” remarks Canon Kenneth Padley, canon treasurer of Salisbury Cathedral, whose remit includes not only caring for the building and driving its green agenda, but also chairing the cathedral’s Arts Advisory Committee.

“There’s a lot we can and are doing, but we are dealing with an ancient building that was not constructed with 21st century climate challenges in mind. Turning the tanker is a long and slow process and it will take time, planning

and dogged patience – but like all jobs around here, it’s not one we can afford to ignore.”

The outlook for the art is a more immediately optimistic one. The cathedral has already committed to a major exhibition in May 2023 – one that is closely tied to its historic values.

To Be Free will be Beth’s first big group exhibition for the cathedral and will feature the work of internationally acclaimed artists, such as the Royal Academician Cornelia Parker, alongside the work of emerging artists.

“I was inspired by the cathedral’s 1215 *Magna Carta*, and the way it has come to represent rights and freedoms for so many different people and causes,” says Beth.

“I started to explore work that examined what freedom is, what it means to be free, how it feels to be free, and the plight of those who are not free. Hopefully the exhibition will challenge us to consider whether we ourselves are free and how we are using our freedom for the greater good.”

One work Beth hopes to include in the show is Cornelia Parker’s *Magna Carta (An Embroidery)*, a 13-metre-long embroidery depicting the *Magna Carta* Wikipedia pages. A nod to the original 1215 document displayed in the Chapter House, the embroidery is an act of democracy in its own right. It includes two hundred hand-stitch portions made by civil rights campaigners, MPs, lawyers, barons, artists and prison inmates. Thirty-six prisoners from 13 different prisons in England contributed to the piece supervised the social enterprise Fine Cell Work. Images on the ‘pages’ were sewn by members of the Embroiderers Guild, Royal School of Needlework and Hand and Lock.

Above: Cornelia Parker’s *Magna Carta (An Embroidery)*, 2015 on show in the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.

As curator Beth is driven by triple demands – the discussion behind the work, the aesthetic impact, and restraints placed on her by the challenges of mounting work in an ancient and protected building. Everything has to work together to create success, and public art is a very personal and public practice.

“I have to stop myself worrying about what people think and stay true to my original intentions,” says Beth, “The process of approval here really helps. You are challenged at every step and questioned on every aspect of your plan. It is hard work but rewarding and helpful.”

For Canon Kenneth Padley, who will be asking some of those hard questions of Beth, there is one certainty at least.

“Accommodating modern art in this ancient space brings fresh perspective on the big questions of life and faith which the cathedral was built to celebrate. Just look at the Frink’s *Walking Madonna*, Antony Gormley’s *Grip Net*, William Pye’s font and the Gabriel Loire window. They all show the cathedral’s commitment to engaging God’s love with contemporary issues and culture. Our job, when we bring art into the cathedral, is to ensure that we do it as consciously as possible and use it to extend the dialogue about the world and society around us.”

WL

- David Batchelor’s solo exhibition runs until February 2, 2023. *To Be Free*, the group exhibition, runs from May – September 2023. Admission to both is free with Cathedral entrance. www.salisburycathedral.org.uk



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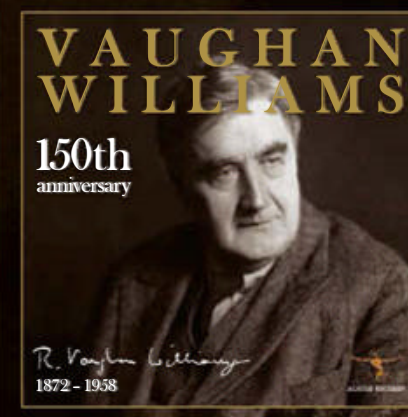
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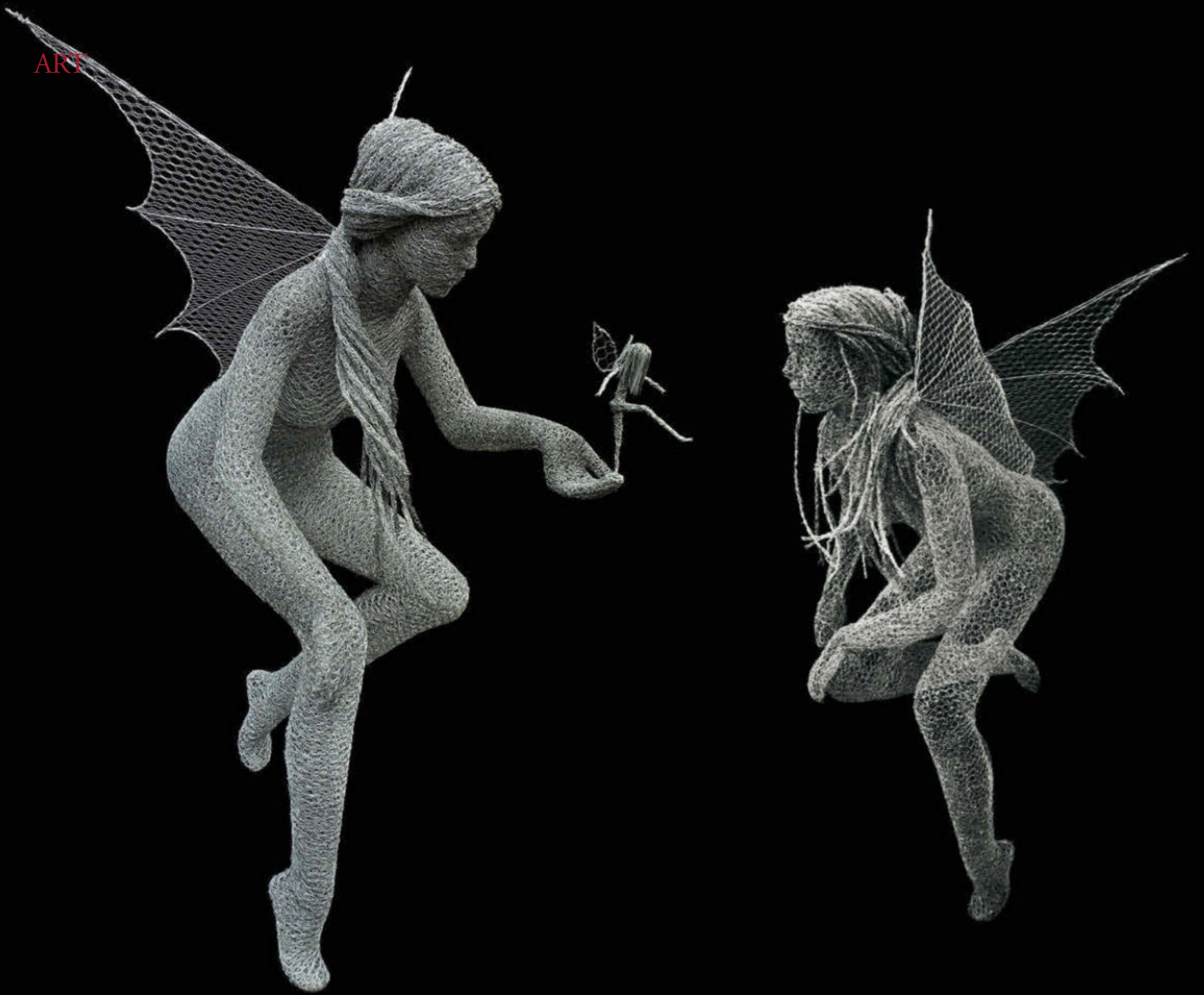
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ART



High wire act suits sculptor's artistic bent



When Derek Kinzett learnt about sculpting he was taught to use a metal frame to base his work on but, as he tells Simon Heptinstall, he decided to concentrate on the frame and now his work is in demand all over the world.

WHEN INTERVIEWING artists it isn't unusual to find oneself sitting among palettes and canvases leaning against walls but

visiting Derek Kinzett's Dilton Marsh studio is more likely to involve an outing to his leaky outhouse – and watching him work with pliers.

That's because his personal style of art involves bending and cutting wire to create extraordinary sculptures. It's a style that has been admired by thousands of fans worldwide.

"I produce sculptures for commissions all over the world," he says. "I've worked on more than 100 commissions. They're in private and corporate collections as far apart as America, Australia, Russia, China, France and Italy."

His wire figures have been exhibited in venues ranging from the grounds of Lacock Abbey and Iford Manor Gardens to the prestigious corporate pavilions of the International Motor Show in Geneva, Switzerland, or a global art show in China.

His fans include Hollywood actor Nicholas Cage who bought one for his country house just over the Wiltshire border in Somerset after seeing Derek's website. "He turned out to be a fan of my sculptures – which was all very surreal," he says.

Another huge boost came when the McLaren sports car company commissioned Derek to make a sculpture to help launch its 720S supercar in 2017. "It was so exciting to create. The brief was to create a muscular, athletic figurative sculpture in a sprinting stance," he recalls.

Although the piece was simply to be made of bent wire it somehow had to project the image of extreme speed, agility and power. Derek achieved that by studying the look and posture of Olympic and world champion sprinter Usain Bolt. His finished piece depicting the dynamic figure was widely praised when it was unveiled at the McLaren stand at the International Motor Show in Switzerland.

Another unusual piece was created for clients in Idaho, USA, via the internet. Derek had to use very accurate measurements to ensure the figure he produced could sit at their Steinway grand piano – and appear to be playing it. He did that by building his own replica of their piano stool and keyboard to place the figure on.

"Working on this sculpture was an absolute pleasure," he recalls. "To achieve the sculpture's all-important 'crazy hair' I used over 900 feet of 0.90 mm mild steel wire which was individually woven to the sculpture's head. It was then styled to project the flow and movement of a pianist passionately playing the piano."

"I love collaborating with clients to bring their different visions for a sculpture to life. In the end I organised to ship it by airfreight to the USA and I was sad to see her leave. I had enjoyed having her around the workshop 'playing' the piano while I worked."

Derek's wire pieces have varied from a collection of fairy-like wood nymphs to a Harley Davidson motorcycle. A Derek Kinzett original typically sells for around £6,000.

For each project Derek spends weeks bending, cutting and shaping galvanised wire into the precise shapes he wants. One life-size figure typically involves using 160ft of wire.

He admits that his hands have suffered from the hours he spends twisting and cutting wire. The middle-aged artist prefers to bend and shape his work without gloves, even though his hands are now covered with scars and calluses. He says he has found he cannot get the same feel for his sculptures when wearing protective gloves.

Derek originally studied art at St Augustine's School in Trowbridge and then at Wiltshire College's Trowbridge campus, where he studied three dimensional design and sculpture.

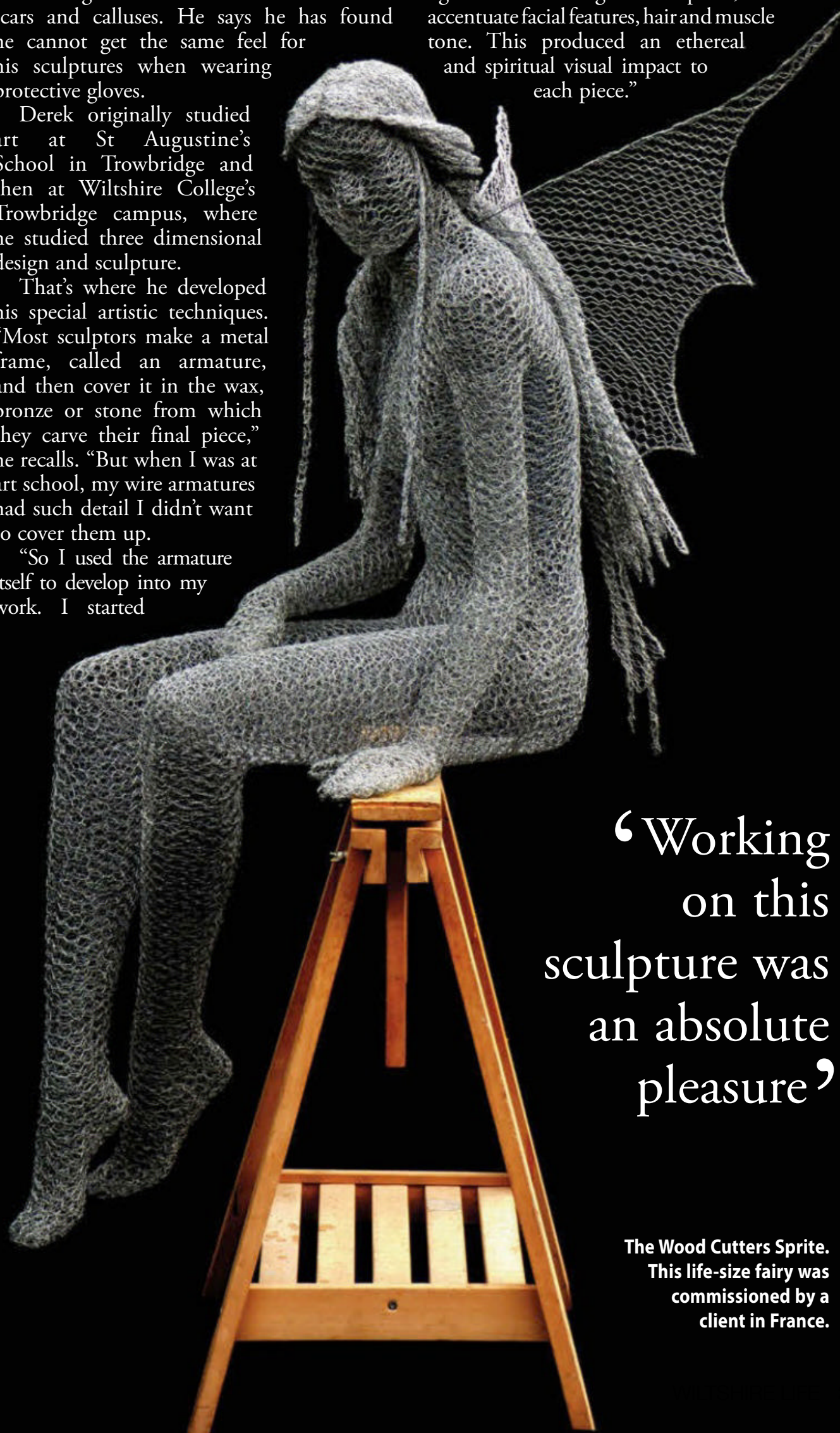
That's where he developed his special artistic techniques. "Most sculptors make a metal frame, called an armature, and then cover it in the wax, bronze or stone from which they carve their final piece," he recalls. "But when I was at art school, my wire armatures had such detail I didn't want to cover them up."

"So I used the armature itself to develop into my work. I started

experimenting with wire as a medium, making the wire armatures larger and adding even more detail until I got to where I am today."

Most of his wire sculptures feature lifelike humans or fantasy figures and are life size – usually about six feet tall. They can be very detailed with the wire outlining delicate lips, eyes and hair.

"I was interested in the effect natural light and shadow had on the surface of the material," says Derek. "After further experimenting with sculpting the body as a hollow form I found that, by allowing natural light to travel through the sculpture, I could accentuate facial features, hair and muscle tone. This produced an ethereal and spiritual visual impact to each piece."



‘Working on this sculpture was an absolute pleasure’

The Wood Cutters Sprite.
This life-size fairy was commissioned by a client in France.



Top left and top right: The Harold Peto sculpture at Iford Manor and unveiling the finished work with the Cartwright-Hignett family.

Above left: Derek working a new project.

Above right: Mother & Child, a commission for a client in Cyprus.

It is this ghostly see-through nature of the sculptures that attracts the attention. Derek usually begins by making sketches and sometimes uses a computer to convert the images into line drawings so that he can get a good three-dimensional feel for the figure. These are then used as a guide for him to cut a mould from blocks of expanding foam.

Once he is happy with the mould, he painstakingly wraps wire around it, sometimes up to five times in order to add strength to the sculpture. The mould is then removed to reveal the see-through sculpture.

Once completed, the sculptures are sprayed with zinc to prevent them rusting and an acrylic aluminium coating is added to restore the original grey colour of the wire.

Derek always installs commissioned pieces in the homes and gardens of their new owners himself.

Career highlights have included a display of six of his figures in the gardens of Hamilton House in Sutton Coldfield, where he was artist in residence earlier this year. Other Kinzett pieces reside in a nightclub

in Philadelphia and at a glossy advertising agency in Melbourne, Australia.

Derek says: "It has been a long, hard slog to get where I am today, but I'm just very happy with how things are going. I think my work can be best appreciated in wide open spaces. When people see sculptures, they often walk straight past – but with mine they might double take and return to have a closer look."

"They seem amazed by the way you can look straight through my sculptures to see the landscape behind. You can see their brain is trying to work out how I made it."

WL

• To see more of Derek's work visit: derekkinzettwiresculpture.co.uk

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Boxing clever

A wild game business that was forced to diversify during lockdown has discovered that a change of direction has opened up new opportunities.

Mary-Vere Parr went along to meet the owners.

“VENISON IS a superfood,” declares Ben Heath, owner of Deer Box, a boxed meat company based in Ramsbury. “It’s a very healthy protein, low in fat and high in omega threes and all the other fatty acids that are good for us, as well as in minerals like zinc and iron.”

His passion for the meat sparked a business that began in lockdown and is now tapping into consumer demand for healthy and sustainably sourced food.

Heath and his friend, the chef Mike Robinson, both keen deer stalkers, manage wild deer herds across some 25,000 acres of Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, and Wiltshire. Before Covid, the venison from the culled deer supplied Robinson’s restaurants which included the Harwood Arms in London.

But when the first lockdown hit in March 2020, just at the end of the main deer stalking season, Robinson was left with a load of carcasses in the chiller and nowhere to send them. “The only option was to cut them up and sell the meat in boxes,” Heath recalls. As chance would have it, it was perfect timing: the boom in demand for home food delivery saw the boxes fly off the shelf. “We shifted those products very, very quickly and breathed a sigh of relief,” he says. “But then we asked ourselves, ‘What are we going to do now?’. We decided to give boxes a go.”

Over the summer of 2020, Heath built a website and developed a strategy to sell frozen meat boxes. He launched Deer Box in August and the team of five moved into its custom-built premises on the Ramsbury Estate in October. The company was fully operational just in time for the second lockdown at Christmas and some well-timed articles in the national press to kickstart interest.



SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Ben Heath heads out stalking at dawn and dusk, across the land they manage which covers around 25,000 acres.

“The newspapers saw that we were doing something good,” Heath says. “Numbers of deer in this country are at an all-time high because we don’t have any predators. We need to manage them for biodiversity, for crop protection and for the health of the herds. It’s a great ecological story.”

The story also chimed with a growing consumer interest in meat provenance. Venison is the ultimate wild meat, coming from animals that range freely over hundreds of acres. In addition, it offers the ultimate in field to fork traceability. Heath shows me the tag that accompanies each carcass, listing when, where and by whom it was shot. “We can trace every single product back to a single animal,” he says. Transparency is his byword, although he refers carefully to harvesting rather than shooting deer.

Each carcass is inspected and quality stamped by a Food Standard Agency vet, butchered on site, vacuum sealed and frozen on the same day for maximum freshness. Next day deliveries are sent out twice a week.

With a range of cuts and products clearly photographed and described on the website, Deer Box’s aim is to provide the online equivalent of visiting a local artisan butcher. The site boasts the widest UK range of cuts and types of venison – from the indigenous red and roe deer to the introduced fallow and muntjac species. You can buy a mixed box or make up your own selection from tenderloin to chops, sausages and bacon. There is no minimum order value.

Online recipes are geared to making venison an everyday and versatile meat, as good for the barbecue as for a family supper. Heath is keen to dispel the image of venison as a strong, “gamey” meat suited only to rich sauces and special occasions. “Venison is mild-flavoured, quick and easy to cook,” he says. “It’s only strong if a deer is harvested in the rutting or mating season when the males are full of testosterone.” At home, he regularly makes a Bolognese pasta sauce with venison mince for his wife and their three boys.

Heath has added a small number of other meats to the range. As well as wild boar, he sources grass-fed lamb and beef, and pork from Tamworth pigs. Traditional farm breeds reared for flavour and tenderness fit the company’s ethos that wild and agricultural animals have a place in our countryside as part of sustainable system to produce quality food while protecting the environment. With the meats coming direct from individual farms, customers can feel connected with their food and where it comes from.

On the morning I visit Deer Box, Heath and his two butchers are taste-testing some red deer steaks on the barbecue. He is keen for me to try one (reader, I did) and then show me one of the estates where he manages deer so that I can make the field to fork connection.



IMAGES COURTESY OF DEER BOX



‘Deer are kings of the forest, especially majestic red deer’

We head out in his truck with its MR 13EN personalised number plate and all the gear, including an infra-red camera. Although it is midday and the animals are usually most visible at dawn and dusk, we spy a herd of around 40 fallow deer grazing on an arable field. Heath also shows me the browse line where they have munched through woodland plantations: proof of the need to manage populations which, post Covid, have rocketed to two million.

But this is not the right time for harvesting. Heath likes to stalk at dusk. It's a solitary pastime and I sense, for him, a spiritual one.

As a child growing up in Goring-on-Thames, he was always interested in the countryside and dreamt of becoming a gamekeeper. But after studying agriculture at the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester he joined his parents in the family furniture business, which he now runs in Newbury as Ben Heath Interiors.

But his childhood passion never dimmed. Five years ago, he got back into stalking and started butchering and cooking deer at home. Today, he stalks once or twice a week. He acknowledges the adrenalin of the hunter-gatherer instinct, but, for him, “there is something spiritual about being out there on your own.”

“Stalking is a lonely job but it's good to connect to nature and that sixth sense of something beyond us,” he says. “Deer are kings of the forest, especially majestic red deer. How big they are, yet how secretive.”

Across these 3,500 acres he tells me he will aim to harvest 100 deer during the main November to March season. He is careful not to disrupt the breeding cycles, avoiding the early autumn fallow rutting season. By balancing the proportion of does to bucks, older and younger animals, he aims to maximise conservation and carcase quality.

Deer Box has won best independent game retailer at the Eat Game Awards for two years running. It has also seen a steady growth in business. The company supplies venison to restaurants from the Ritz in London to the Crown and Anchor in Ham, including an expanding range of Mike Robinson restaurants in the Hotel Indigo chain across the country. It also sends out up to 50 meat boxes a week to customers from the home counties to the Highlands of Scotland who range from game enthusiasts to vegans happy to buy meat bones for their dogs.

From left to right: Mike Robinson and Ben Heath with farmer and BBC Countryfile presenter Adam Henson at the Eat Game Awards where Deer Box won Best Small Game Retailer for the second year in a row.

Everything is done with sustainability in mind from the lead-free shot used in ammunition to the recycled plastic vacuum packs, the cardboard packaging, paper tape and wool cool padding. Even the freezer packs can be returned for reuse. And 10 per cent of all Deer Box's venison mince is donated to the Country Food Trust, a charity that distributes ready meals to people in need via organisations such as the Trussell Trust and Fare Share.

It is a market that Heath believes has great potential. He reels off the stats: currently only three per cent of venison harvested in the UK is sold to consumers, while 17 per cent goes to restaurants and the rest is exported. Boxes are a way of adding value to a meat that, post Brexit, has lost its main market and seen prices plummet.

It's a difficult market to get into and we are still very, very small,” Heath says. “But there are big opportunities.”

WL

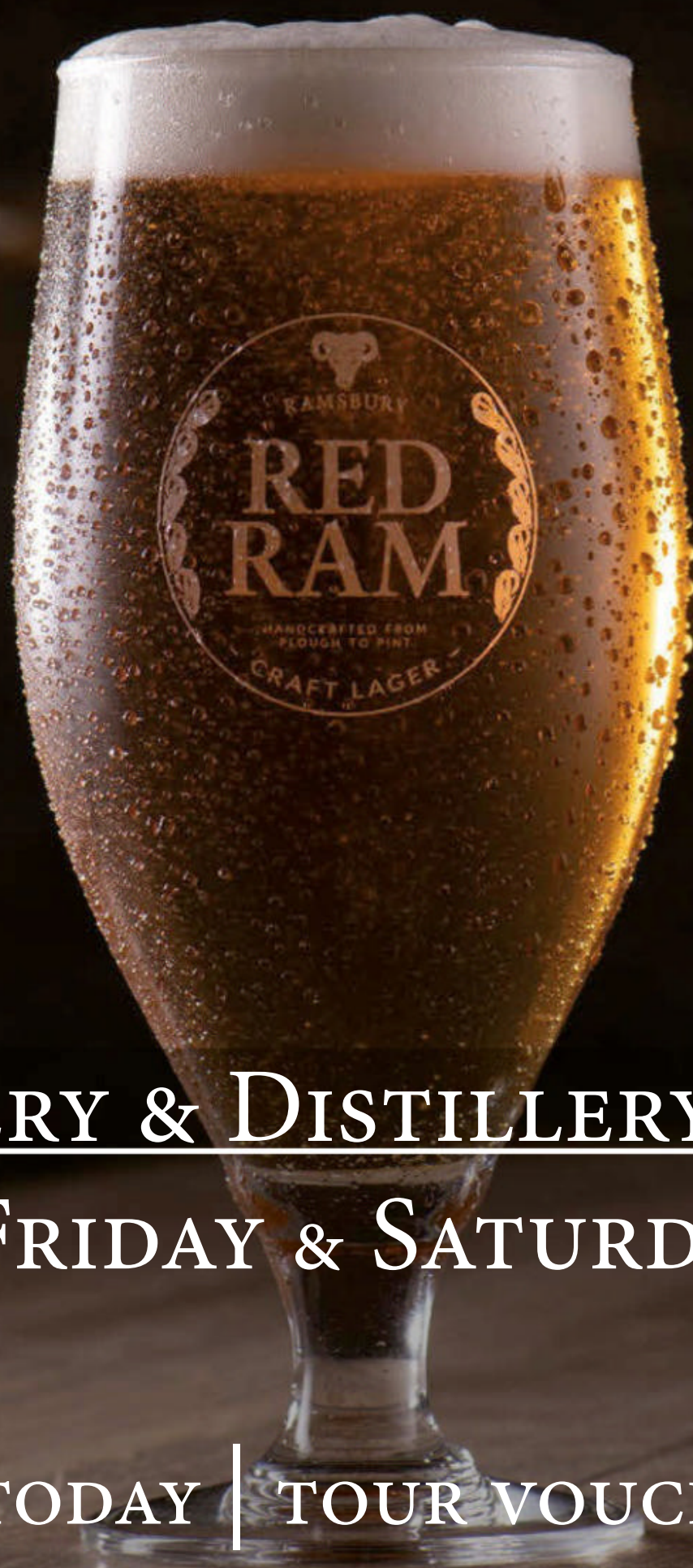
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Beauty idea helps family face the future

When Charlotte-Ann Fidler's husband left her she turned to a dormant business plan, and her daughters, for salvation. She told Mary-Vere Parr how it all came together.

THIS IS where I live and what I love: country houses, country gardens – and country cats,” declares Charlotte-Anne Fidler, founder of the teen skincare and hair range Spots & Stripes, former glossy magazine beauty editor, mother of two and owner of three large and entertaining Maine Coon cats.

She moved from London with her husband and their two daughters, Anouk and Bo, in 2011 to a 17th century house in Seend. Two years later, after 23 years working full-time for the likes of *Vogue*, *Elle* and *Glamour*, she went freelance to spend more time at home and in the garden she loved. Everything looked rosy.

Then the bombshell landed. In 2016, her husband announced he was leaving. By the spring of 2017, she faced the prospect of losing her dream home. Her husband wanted to

sell up but she was determined to stay. “I was, no, I’m not allowing this. I may have lost my marriage but I am not losing this house.”

Realising that she needed to generate a bigger income that would allow her to buy her husband out, she dusted down a business idea she had in 2015.

Then she had toyed with the idea of a skin and hair care range for eight to 16-year-olds. Now, with everything to play for, she was determined to give it a go. Daunting as the prospect of a self-funded start-up was, she had three aces up her sleeve.





INNOVATIVE BUSINESS



The first was a little black book of beauty industry contacts. “The good thing about being a magazine person was I could get lots of good advice in different areas,” she recalls. “My advice for any start-up is contact people who’ve done it before and ask them lots of questions. People are pretty generous with their knowledge and the more questions you ask, the more you’ll learn and the less mistakes you’ll hopefully make.”

Through her contacts, Charlotte-Anne was introduced to a Somerset-based manufacturer with whom she spent eight months researching and developing a range of nine products.

Critically, the manufacturer was willing to do small runs of 100 of each of the products so that Fidler could develop capsule collections for girls and boys. “All the other manufacturers were laughing at me,” she recalls. “I was just really lucky. You have to have luck. I wanted the products to be good but they are even better than I thought they would be because this manufacturer goes the extra mile to source ingredients.”

The second ace up her sleeve was her children. Her older daughter, Anouk, inspired the original range. In 2015, aged 12, she was growing out of the “baby” products her

When Charlotte-Anne was setting up the business her children and their friends helped to test the products.

mother had always hunted out for her. But when Charlotte-Anne started looking for a natural deodorant and a spot stick suitable for a tween she found that existing adult and organic products did not cut it on the look or smell front. “I could see her reaction to them wasn’t positive and realised that there was a gap in the market for chemical-free products that would appeal to children her age,” Fidler says. “I started to do the research and put

RICHARD FAIRER



Above: Charlotte-Anne and her eldest daughter Anouk in the garden at their home in Seend.

ideas down: why is this needed, what's the unique selling point to parents, who is this Gen Z child with opinions?"

The third ace up her sleeve was her magazine experience. "What I didn't realise at the time was that this was fantastic training for creating a brand – from the look of the website to what's in the products," she says. It also gave her the confidence of her own judgement to fly in the face of accepted wisdom and choose colourful packaging. The industry orthodoxy at the time was that "serious" skincare had to be white. "But I knew it had to be a brand that didn't look anything like adult products," Fidler says. "Tweens and teens aren't normal customers. They want something joyful."

The result was a blueprint for a natural, earth-friendly and safe brand that also looked good. "My aim was to create products that looked great, were effective and helped tweens and teens get through those tricky years of puberty, especially when today's image-obsessed world is so tough for them," she says.

As well as being free from sulphates and parabens, Charlotte-Anne was determined to make sure her products were as gentle as baby and young child products. "There's so much stuff out there that is not gentle," she says. "Between eight and 13 or 14 you don't want to use things that have ingredients that impact your hormones when they are all over the place. In fact, the whole baby/child gentleness ethos needs to extend up to 15 or 16."

Anouk, Bo and their friends became the guinea pigs, trialling the range, giving feedback and spreading the word. With no marketing budget to play with, social media was vital.

Developing Spots & Stripes says its creator, was her saviour. "It was cathartic to feel proactive. I was building a future for myself and my girls."

The range went on sale in September 2018 and the plaudits started to come in. Stars and Stripes won Best Product for Teens at the Beauty Shortlist Awards. "We've had some amazing highs," Fidler says. When the brand was mentioned on ITV's *This Morning*, the website almost crashed, "the orders were coming in ping, ping, ping". But building brand awareness is "an enormously long and hard journey". "It's like climbing mountain ranges," she says. "You get to one peak and then you see the next."

On the horizon now are new products (an SPF sunscreen and arnica balm have just been launched), dipping a toe in the European market, talking to a UK wholesaler and working on sustainability.

The products beauty miles are low with manufacture just over the border in Somerset and most ingredients sourced in the UK. Charlotte-Anne hopes to launch a new biopolymer one litre bottle next year to encourage people to buy bigger bottles of their favourite products and use them to refill and reuse their

regular size cleanser, shampoo and body wash bottles. She is also exploring using bottles made from ocean plastic waste.

The star product remains the gentle cleansing lotion. The cheerful spots and stripes of the packaging is designed to appeal to both boys and girls and even their parents. "I hear of fathers stealing their sons' pomade," laughs Charlotte-Anne. Although two thirds of the market is girls, boys also go for the skin and hair care and deodorants. Gift boxes make appealing presents whether it be a boarding school bundle or a stocking present of body spray.

Spots and Stripes remains principally an online business – the website, online shop and dedicated Instagram perfectly positioned for lockdown. She has begun advertising on Google and an Amazon presence pushes sales. Nicole Kidman is even said to be a fan.

But Charlotte-Anne also values the personal touch, attending local school fairs. "Hearing from the parents keeps me going," she says. "Whether they are messaging me on Instagram or we meet them in person, they're leaving reviews or emailing us." The website keeps up the conversational tone with "Skin School" topics such as "Why natural is best" and "How to put pomade on like a pro".

Although she's graduated to a warehouse in Swindon rather than using her garage or a neighbour's stable to store products, Charlotte-Anne's office is still the kitchen table, and she is still up all hours with her assistant making sure boxes are packed just right.

Appearances matter but her driving ethos remains more than skin deep. "Bad skin really impacts on the mental health of children," she says. "Helping them with their skin will help them feel better about themselves. I like the fact that we do something that is really important for their whole well-being." WL

- www.spots-and-stripes.com
- @spotsandstrips
- @charlotte_annefidler



Right: Charlotte-Anne's daughters Anouk and Bo are the inspiration behind the business.



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Step out across the county

Wrap up warm and take a hike across our hills and vales on these walks suggested by VisitWiltshire.



CRISP, COLD, frosty days transform our countryside into a winter wonderland. Here six places to take a seasonal scenic walk.



• To discover more walks or events taking place in the county: www.visitwiltshire.co.uk

1. Avebury – National Trust

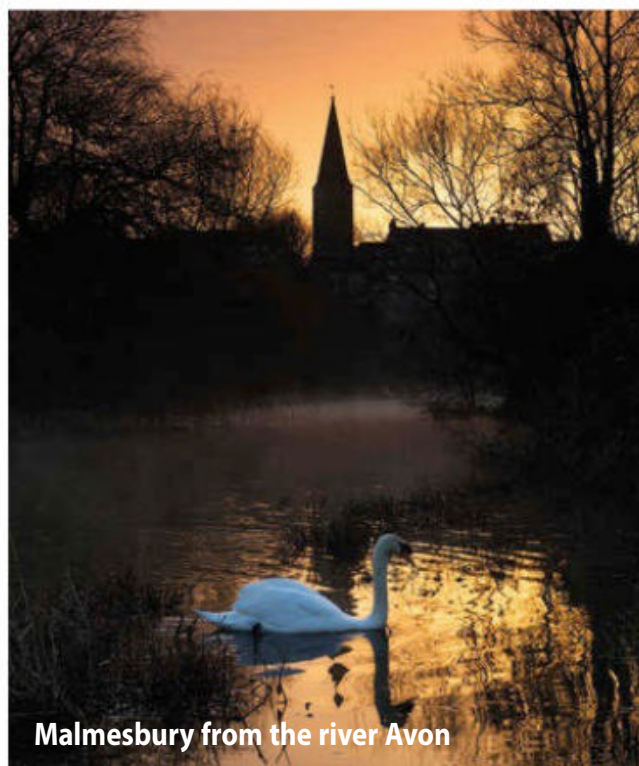
Walk amongst history at the World Heritage Site of Avebury this winter. Here you will find the world's largest stone circle as well as stone avenues, and ancient tombs. Most of Avebury and its surrounding landscape is also owned by National Trust, making it accessible for everyone all year round. Car parking on site.

• <https://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/things-to-do/avebury-stone-circle-and-avebury-manor-and-garden-p134483>



Avebury stone circle

PHOTOS: VISITWILTSHIRE.CO.UK



Malmesbury from the river Avon

2. Malmesbury

Circled by the River Avon, the town of Malmesbury offers plenty of lovely walks, passing local sites along the way such as Abbey House Gardens and St Aldhem's Mead as well as incredible views spanning across the hilltop town. Visit the Malmesbury Information Centre to pick up a walking guide upon your next visit. Car parking at Malmesbury long stay and Waitrose car park.

- <https://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/towns-and-villages/malmesbury-p462443>



Hanging Langford

3. Cranborne Chase AONB

Wiltshire is lucky to be amongst three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty including Cranborne Chase which lies in the southwest of the county. Pop past quintessentially English villages or explore iconic sites like Old Wardour Castle. There are plenty of walking opportunities with breath-taking countryside views around every corner. Car parking available at most sites.

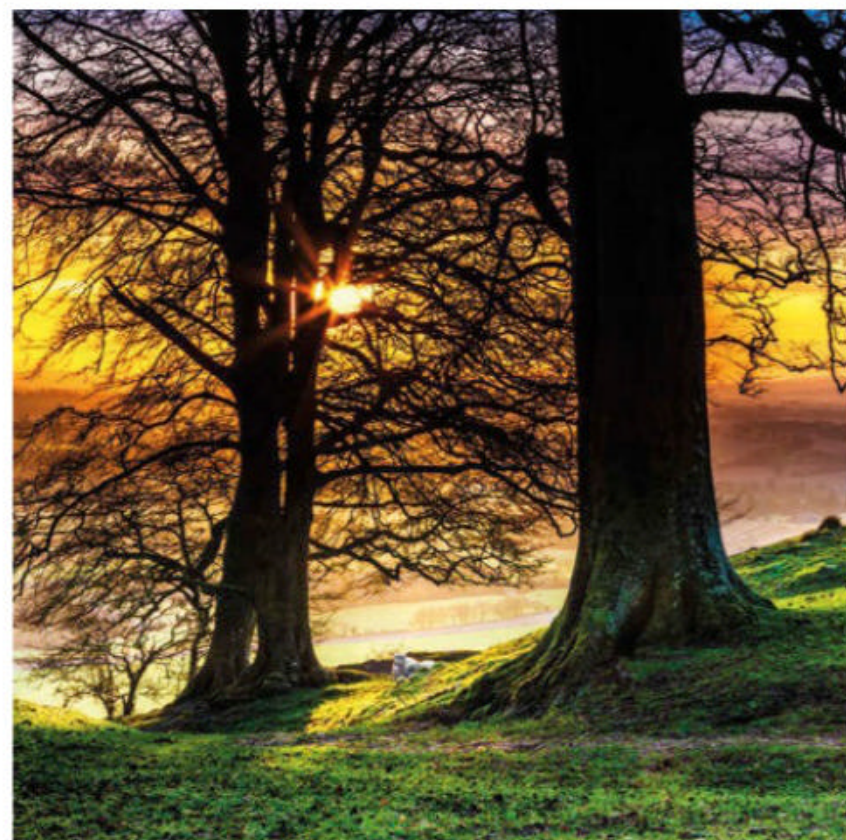
- <https://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/things-to-do/cranborne-chase-and-west-wiltshire-downs-area-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-aonb-p1596023>

4. Vale of Pewsey

Escape the hustle and bustle of nearby towns by venturing through the Vale of Pewsey this winter. Located within North Wessex Downs AONB and with Kennet and Avon canal running through, experience breath-taking views as you discover the many walking routes on offer. Car parks available in Pewsey.

- <https://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/towns-and-villages/vale-of-pewsey-p476513>

View across the Vale of Pewsey on a winter's day.



5. Shearwater Lake Longleat

Nestled amongst the wildlife at Longleat is Shearwater Lake, a picturesque location perfect for those crisp wintery walks. Venture along the lakeside, capturing beautiful reflections of surrounding scenery, or for an extended walk, journey to the wider estate to enjoy spectacular views at Heaven's Gate. Limited car parking available – charges may apply.

- <https://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/dbimgs/Wiltshire%20Walk%207.pdf>

Shearwater Lake.

6. The Great West Way

Passing through Wiltshire, the Great West Way is filled with wonderful walks, perfect for this season, with picturesque towns such as Marlborough, Calne, and Corsham located directly on the route, make the most of stunning views as you explore the historical destinations filled with plenty on offer for all ages.

- <https://www.greatwestway.co.uk/see-and-do/activities/walking>

Corsham Forest.







Winter sunset at lock 34,
Caen Hill Locks, Devizes.



Cost of living crisis

Wiltshire Community Foundation has launched a Cost of Living Crisis Appeal to help grass roots groups across Swindon and Wiltshire cope with a surge in demand from people struggling with bills. Gary Lawrence spoke to some of the groups on the frontline.

HEAATHER PRICTOR HAS often been to bed thinking about food lately. Not so much her own diet but more about whether there will be enough provisions for the likely 150 people who will begin queuing an hour before the community fridge she helps organise opens.

She and her fellow volunteers are behind Gorse Hill Baptist Church's Boxes of Love project in Swindon, begun almost two years ago with a Community Grant from Wiltshire Community Foundation. The initial support for people on low incomes in the area came in the form of weekly food bags containing provisions to families and individuals referred by schools, health visitors and housing support workers.

Volunteers are still delivering up to 80 bags a week but demand for additional help led to the community fridge opening in the church hall in June 2021.

While the food bags are funded through money raised from grants and donations, the fridge relies on donated food from supermarkets in the town that would otherwise go to waste and in the time it has

been in operation a staggering 20,000 people have been fed – preventing 50 tonnes of food going to landfill.

"There's never any guarantee of what you are going to get," she says. "This week we seemed to get a lot of potatoes and no bread, when usually we have a lot of bread."

Recently she and the team of volunteers who go to supermarkets and food suppliers have seen a drop-off in donations, partly because retailers are doubling down on orders. "In order to get the same amount of food to meet the demand we have to go to more supermarkets," says Heather.

"It has been quite tricky because they all go through a third party, like the Fare Share scheme or apps like Food Diverse or Neighbourly, and lots of the other charities already have those slots to pick up the food so it has taken us quite a while to get enough. We have just had to up our game and get more slots."

There have been a few times when supplies have dwindled. "Some days we have been thinking 'we've got no food for tomorrow and we are going to have a queue of 150' but for whatever reason the food has always turned up and we've been okay," says Heather.

The volunteer team noticed that a number of people coming to queue did so in search of more than just food. "They were also coming because they were lonely and isolated," says Heather. "So we opened a drop-in café in the hall every Monday."

"With winter coming and food and gas prices going up, people want to save money and we have a had a full hall all day. People can come and sit in the warm and chat."

The café has now become an officially designated Swindon Borough Council Warm Space.

Heather says she and the volunteer team of 45 could never have imagined how filling a few bags of food would grow into such a major source of help. "Never for one minute did we think that we'd be running something that is so valuable to the community and that we would build lots of relationships with people," she says.

Above: HEALS of Malmesbury community fridge collection. Co-op worker Steve Sanders, left, HEALS volunteer Nick Coppin, Co-op member pioneer Lou James, HEALS volunteers Martin Elli and Pam Coppin, Malmesbury Store Manager Alan Spall and Regional Manager David Jones.

Gavin Grant, chairman of trustees at HEALS of Malmesbury, has seen the same spike in demand. His group provides debt advice and support with benefit claims for people on the breadline in the town and surrounding area.

“People are being broken by this crisis. We have had conversations with people who say they are going to cut their electricity or their gas off to save money,” he says. “People are just feeling beaten down by the systems. We are seeing people whose hours have become more irregular in employment, particularly in hospitality, and are therefore seeing a disruption to Universal Credit.

“We are starting to see all of those tensions and pressures and that is leading to tensions in the home. What we are really fearful of is that people will have run up debt to have a happy Christmas with their kids and then the avalanche will hit in the New Year.”

‘People
are being
broken by
this crisis’

HEALS works with the town’s foodbank and has seen the number of vouchers it distributes rise by 75 per cent in a year. Partly moved by the thought of food waste and the number of people seeking help with food, HEALS opened a community fridge in the town hall in August and have been staggered by the take-up.

“We just wanted to increase the volume of free food available in the town,” says Gavin. “We started off with three collections a week from the local Co-ops, that has now expanded to ten a week as Aldi is now on board as well and we are talking to Waitrose.

“The more we put in there it seems to be the more that goes. We pretty much stock it every day and every day it is cleaned out.”

His team of advisors are seeing more and more complex cases, involving multiple issues of debt, anxiety and benefits issues, that take more staff hours to solve. This week Gavin has spoken to a young mum with two children whose partner left, leaving her with the bill – in his name.

“The energy company is taking £1 a time straight off her key meter payments each time she tops up against the arrears to pay

his debt – and he is no longer resident,” says Gavin. “She is terrified and the kids need coats and wellies. She says it’s either the coats and wellies or heating.”

Like many charities fundraising is increasingly a challenge with donors either less able to give or faced with more asks. “The demands are so great on those who are giving, and this is true for businesses as well,” says Gavin.

“You have got to be imaginative on what you do in terms of raising money and how you can make it as easy as possible for people to help you. You have got to be prepared to do more and get less, that’s the truth of it. It’s more competitive, no question.”

But with a steady stream of people needing help – people who a year ago would never have needed assistance – the motivation is huge.

Says Gavin: “The pattern we are seeing is a big increase in foodbank vouchers, people

coming through our doors who we’ve never seen before who are starting run up debts and a more aggressive approach appearing to be taken by businesses and housing associations on debt and moving to court action faster.

“People are just really struggling and the scale of some of these debts is pretty terrifying frankly, we are talking in some cases about thousands, which will cause us quite a major problem. We’ve got about £20,000 in our hardship fund but that is not going to last us very long.”

Trowbridge Future has two hubs supporting people with food, advice and support. Community co-ordinator Zoe Meaden is busy in the Seymour estate hub in Charles Street, stacking tins for visitors to that morning’s Kindness Café, somewhere for lonely and isolated people to share a cup of tea and a chat, to take home.



Top right: HEALS of Malmesbury volunteers Nick Coppin, Martin Ellis and Pam Coppin stocking the community fridge in the town hall for the first time.

Bottom right: Malmesbury Mayor Kim Power officially opens the HEALS community fridge.



Above: A volunteer shares a cup of tea with a guest at Trowbridge Future's Kindness Cafe.

She also runs a community fridge that regularly attracts up to 30 people.

"People are having to make the choice between paying their rising monthly commitments and putting healthy, nutritious food on the table," she says. "They can't afford to put the heating on and have regular hot running water which means that their standard of living has reduced, homes are not warm and comfortable and they can't regularly launder items.

"We are really concerned about our current service users who are already in a very vulnerable place in their lives and we are deeply concerned about them going into high end crisis which could lead to significant medical and mental health interventions."

While food, and being able to afford enough of it, is the easiest barometer of

increasingly biting poverty, charities and grass roots groups are seeing it manifested in every sphere of their work.

The pressure of having to make ends meet or the feeling of failure when unable to provide for the family can take its toll on mental health. Help Counselling in Trowbridge, which asks clients to make voluntary donations for their sessions, has had to close its waiting list twice in the last year and has increased its counsellors from 12 to 24 to meet an 80 per cent increase in demand since 2018.

Chief executive Amanda Wilkes says: "The issue we have is that to have more counsellors requires more time to support the counsellors, who are often students. There are few funders that want to pay core costs such as salaries, rent and utilities and only want to fund exciting and innovative projects, not ones that have an already proven record of working. It is very frustrating."

Wiltshire and Swindon Credit Union

lends more than £1 million a year to 3,500 active members. Its loans are designed to help families who are unable to get credit elsewhere to prevent them from going to payday loan companies with crippling interest rates or even illegal loan sharks. Members open savings accounts and, provided they meet loan criteria, can take out loans, which are repaid monthly.

Most loans are to help with unexpected expenses such as car repairs or replacing white goods but now staff are seeing requests for loans to pay everyday bills, such as gas bills – but are having to decline them.

"For every loan application we receive we request an income and expenditure form and people's disposable income has been dramatically reduced," staff member Bridget Shone says.

"We are having to decline loans even for people who are up to date with their payments and are still good payers. We can't authorise a top-up to an existing because their disposable income isn't sufficient to deem the loan affordable, which is distressing for everybody really."

Each applicant is signposted to other agencies that may be able to help, as well as a website to check if they are receiving the right benefits.

Adds Bridget: "It's very, very hard and it feels very mean to decline but the reality is that if their finances are so marginal and fragile, we can't afford to take that risk because one of the things about the credit union is that we belong to our members."

Colleague Gemma Sadler, who works in credit control, adds: "It's knowing that there are people out there that desperate that they are asking for a loan so that they can buy food. The problem is they get a one-off payment from us but what happens next week and the week after?

"You just imagine these people sitting in the dark, the way that they talk to us, the fact you have people living like this in this day and age is just horrendous."

WL

Two appeals will help groups and charities support those most in need

Wiltshire Community Foundation is running two appeals this winter to help alleviate the effects of the cost of living crisis.

Surviving Winter, now in its 13th year, sees the community foundation work with Age UK, Warm and Safe Wiltshire and both Swindon and Wiltshire Citizens Advice to award fuel grants for vulnerable and older people and also provide them with the help and advice to make them better equipped to cope with winter in the future.

Last year the appeal helped 1,567 people receive grants via energy vouchers of up to £210 to pay fuel bills, targeted advice on making their homes more energy efficient and help with applying for benefits they may not ever have known they were entitled to.

The community foundation's Cost of Living Crisis Appeal will generate vital funds to help grassroots voluntary groups and charities in Wiltshire who are supporting families and individuals in the face of escalating rent, food and energy prices.

"We are hearing of increased need across the county with food banks running out of food and more and more people unable to afford to eat or heat their homes to a safe level," says joint chief executive Fiona Oliver.

"These funds will support projects which are keeping people fed and warm and provide additional practical support and advice to help people cope throughout this period of great hardship.

"Everyone is facing an extra squeeze on their finances at the moment but any amount donated to the appeal will help some of the amazing groups across Wiltshire and Swindon maintain the support they are giving to families and individuals.

"Some people have already kindly made a donation of all or part of their Winter Fuel Allowance or Energy Bill Discount as they are in a position not to need all of it and we are able to direct this generosity to where it is needed most."

- To donate to either fund go to wiltshirecf.org.uk, send a cheque made out to Wiltshire Community Foundation to 21 Northgate Street, Devizes, SN10 1JX or phone 01380 729284.



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Pointless landmarks are a folly good waste of time

If there's one thing Wiltshire excels in it is follies, our landed gentry spent the 17th and 18th centuries dotting them around the county. Stephen Roberts takes us on a tour of the most eye-catching and delightfully pointless.

MY TRUSTY dictionary has two uses of the word folly. One is: "Being foolish, lack of good sense, unwise conduct, foolish act, idea, or practice, ridiculous thing." The other is: "Costly structure that is (considered) useless."

Arguably it is an act of folly to erect a folly (as it were) but we Brits are eccentric though. If there were medals for eccentricity we would win a shedload, although shedload might not be the most appropriate word given that a shed is actually useful.

Many of the fanciful structures on this whistlestop tour of Wiltshire were built during the golden age of follies between 1750 and 1850 and had hardly, if any, useful purpose – therein lies their charm.

Avebury

Most famous for stone circles, larger and arguably more impressive than the greater exalted Stonehenge, Avebury has other treasures, including Avebury Manor. Dating to Elizabethan times, the house is famed for its gardens and topiary, plus a splendid circular dovecot which dates

back centuries, I believe to the mid-16th century, making it contemporary with the manor. You may be tempted to object and claim that a dovecot isn't a folly as it has a purpose. However, equipped with no fewer than 15 tiers of nest boxes, this one is just too ostentatious. Purposed, but over-elaborate and showy so it is ticking my folly boxes.

Burbage

There's a 100 foot tall Ionic column, the Ailesbury Column, at Burbage. It wasn't originally here though. Erected in Hammersmith in around 1760, by George Doddington in memory of his wife, the monument was re-installed in Savernake Forest in 1789, the year of the French Revolution. Thomas Bruce wanted to make a statement, thanking his uncle, Charles, for handing down the title, Earl of Ailesbury. Some sources say it was a few years before, in 1781, however, the

monument's inscription specifically mentions King George III's recovery from his first serious bout of insanity, which was in 1789.

Corsham

Replete with alleged follies, Corsham has the Bath House, the Bradford Porch, Wellhead, Gazebo and Dairy for debate. One that's undeniably a folly, however, is the Sham Ruin. Erected at Corsham Court, the structure was built as a ruin, its purpose being to screen the estate's stables from the road. Built for Lord Methuen in around 1797 with stone pilfered from Chippenham Abbey and standing at 100 ft long and 60ft high, the ruin looks every inch the medieval castle. Capability Brown made alterations to the court and Humphry Repton laid out the gardens.

Below left to right: The dovecote at Avebury Manor; The Ailesbury Column at Burbage; The Sham Ruin in the grounds of Corsham Court.



Top to bottom, left to right: The ornamental Gothic gate arch in Lacock; The Tower House in Malmesbury which has 'folly' written all over it; The Pantheon at Stourhead; The Temple at the Larmer Tree Gardens, Tollard Royal.

Lacock

Blessed with Twin Columns and a Gothic Arch, I'm focussed on the latter at Lacock. The Great Hall was designed and built at Lacock Abbey by Sanderson Miller for John Ivory Talbot in the 18th century and it was in 1754 that Miller also designed the ornate Gothic carriage arch that once had gates. The abbey had passed to the Talbots in the 17th century and one of their number, famed photography pioneer Henry Fox Talbot, made his contribution by planting some interesting trees in the gardens, including black walnuts. Sanderson Miller meanwhile was noted for adding follies to the grounds of an estate.

Malmesbury

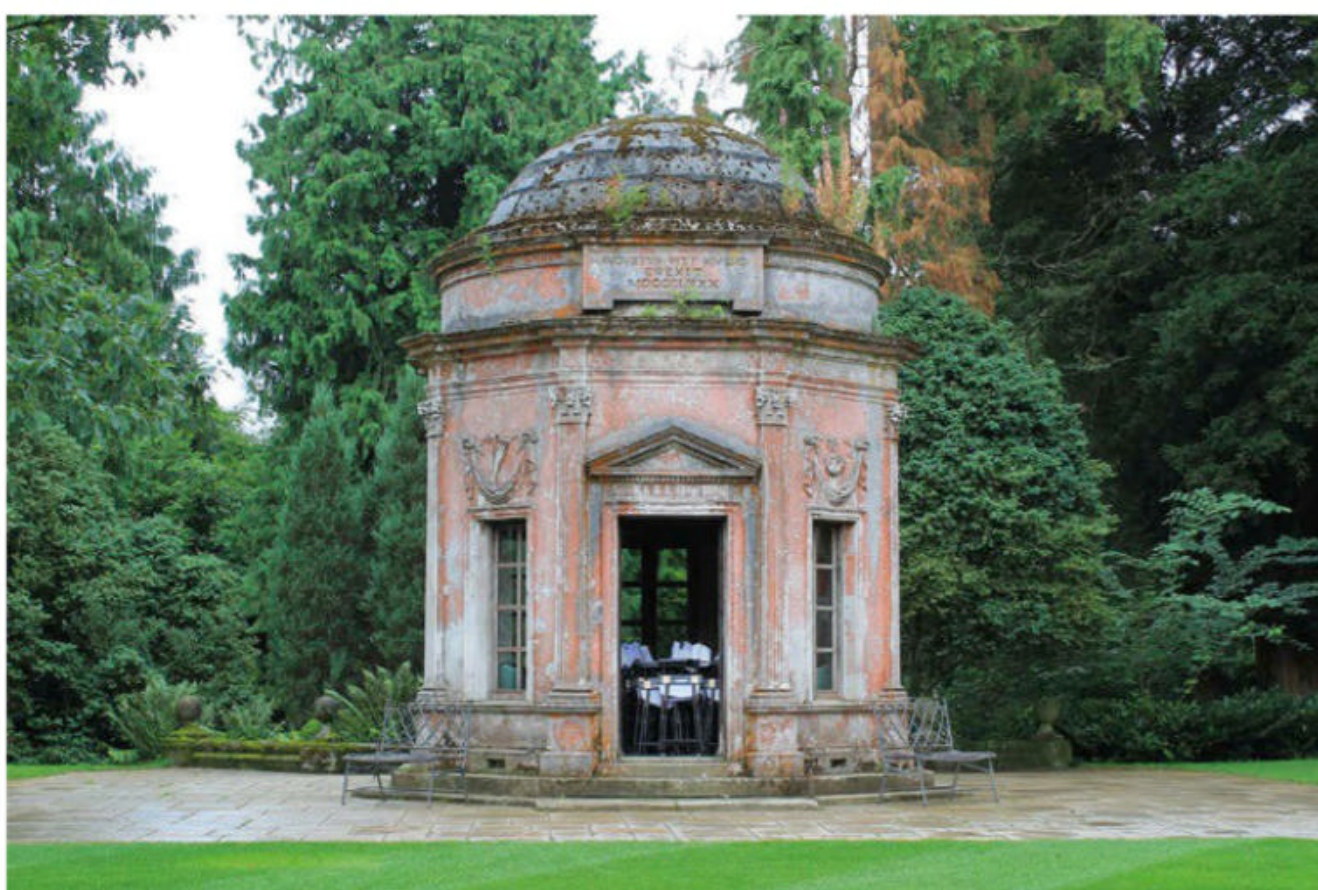
Malmesbury's Market Cross has been dubbed a folly, however, John Leland's description of it in 1544 as a 'right faire piece of work for poor folks to stande dry when rayne cometh' makes it sound eminently useful. The Tower, which looks a total folly, stands incongruously atop a roof like it's been plonked there as a deliberate annoyance to the neighbours. It was actually built as an observatory though, which does kind of make sense when you look at it. The man with the idea was Dr Player, Malmesbury's physician, in 1834. Player happened to be a keen stargazer.

Stourton with Gasper

So, Stourhead to you and me, which has more follies than you can shake the average stick at, and more than I can list in a few words. I found 16 structures named for the grounds of the great house of Stourhead, one of the earliest erected in the Georgian style, a Palladian eminence designed by Colen Campbell and finished in 1722. A walk around the lake (just over a mile) won't be an act of folly. Not only is it good exercise, but you'll see grottoes, the Temple of Flora, a Temple of the Sun, and a Pantheon, copied from the one in Rome. It was designed by Henry Flitcroft for Henry Hoare in 1753-54 and was originally dubbed the 'Temple of Hercules'.

Tollard Royal

There's another temple at Tollard Royal, the Larmer Tree Temple, sited in the Larmer Gardens which lie around a mile above the village. The Royal came from King John who hunted hereabouts and the Larmer also has a John association. The monarch reputedly met his huntsmen under a Larmer tree, aka Wych Elm. The famous tree blew down in 1894 to be





Above: The Grotto at Wardour Castle.
Above right: Eyre's Folly, Whiteparish.

replaced with an oak. It was General Pitt-Rivers who transformed Larmer into today's pleasure grounds in 1880, the temple being just one of several structures erected for him after he'd inherited the 32,000 acre estate from a cousin.

Wardour

Heading to Old and New Wardour Castles, I'm spoiled with another line-up of alleged follies: The Banqueting House, Rock Arch, Stone Circle and Rustic Alcoves. The one I like most is the Grotto, built by Josiah Lane of Tisbury around 1792. Apparently, he'd been tasked with chucking up a grotto cum cave incorporating dripping water, ferns and

Below: The Palladian Bridge at Wilton House.



fossils, and using stone and other materials from the old medieval castle. New Wardour Castle, a stupendous Palladian mansion, was built about a mile from the old one and designed for Lord Arundell by James Paine in 1769. You can't beat a good grotto.

Whiteparish

Eyre's Folly at Whiteparish would look like Dr Player's tower if it was plonked on to a building. Instead it's on top of a hill, known today as Pepperbox Hill, and was erected in 1606, most likely as a hunting stand for Giles Eyre of Brickworth House. Good to see Mr Eyre maintaining the standards set by King John a few centuries earlier. We should possibly make that Mrs Eyre, as it may have been built so she could comfortably watch said hunt. Hexagonally shaped, and three stories, the brick tower's roof was rebuilt



around 1900 with a weathervane on top. The structure is bricked up today but is still one of our oldest follies.

Wilton

Finally, we're at Wilton House where once again there's a cornucopia of follies. I've chosen the Palladian Bridge out of the folly riches. It was built in 1737 by the 9th Earl and his clerk of works Roger Morris and is modelled on a design for Venice's Rialto Bridge, however, not the one there today, but a rejected design by Andrea Palladio (hence the name). Venice's loss was Wilton's gain. Wilton House was redesigned after a fire of 1647, its gardens a delight, especially notable for the old cedar trees and our bridge over the Nadder. I suppose a bridge is a bridge except this one is more eye-catcher than anything. It certainly achieves that.

WL

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Architect's reputation forged in fire of Westminster

The accidental destruction of the House of Lords in 1834 paved the way for Salisbury's Augustus Pugin to cement his place in the pantheon of great British architects. Nicholas Fogg explains.

UNIDENTIFIED PAINTER, NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY



ON THE night of October 16, 1834, a huge crowd gathered to watch the biggest conflagration to occur in London between the Great Fire of 1666 and The Blitz.

It was caused by the burning of the wooden tally sticks used by the Exchequer. At 4pm, two Irish workmen, Joshua Cross and Patrick Furlong, loaded them into two furnaces in the Palace of Westminster's basement. Satisfied that the job was accomplished, they adjourned for a few beers in a nearby pub.

Unfortunately, the heat of the blaze caused fires in the flues running under the House of Lords. At 6pm the alarm was raised, but it was too late. The fire ran through the ancient buildings, the flames rising so high that they could be seen at Windsor.

Although he would not have known it at the time, the fire would have a great impact on a young man living in Salisbury. Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin was born in 1812 of a father who had fled from the Terror in France.

His father, a skilled draughtsman, worked with celebrated architect John Nash before founding a successful school of architectural drawing. Despite having won a commission to design furniture for Windsor Castle at the age of 15, the son's early life was neither happy nor successful.

When he was 18, he acquired a small schooner to trade between Britain and Holland, but that venture ended when he was shipwrecked off the Scottish coast. A business selling Gothic furniture was another failure and he was imprisoned for non-payment of rent.

In January 1832, he married 18-year old Sarah Anne Garnet who was four months pregnant and on May 20 she gave birth to a daughter, Anne. Pugin was devastated when she died a week later but the following year he married again.

Little is known of his bride, the 20-year old Louisa Button. Benjamin Ferrey, his childhood companion and biographer, suggested he moved to Salisbury in September 1834 because that was where she was from. Pugin probably met her when he was designing and creating sets for the Covent Garden Theatre.

She was to bear her husband six children before her death at the age of 29 in 1841.

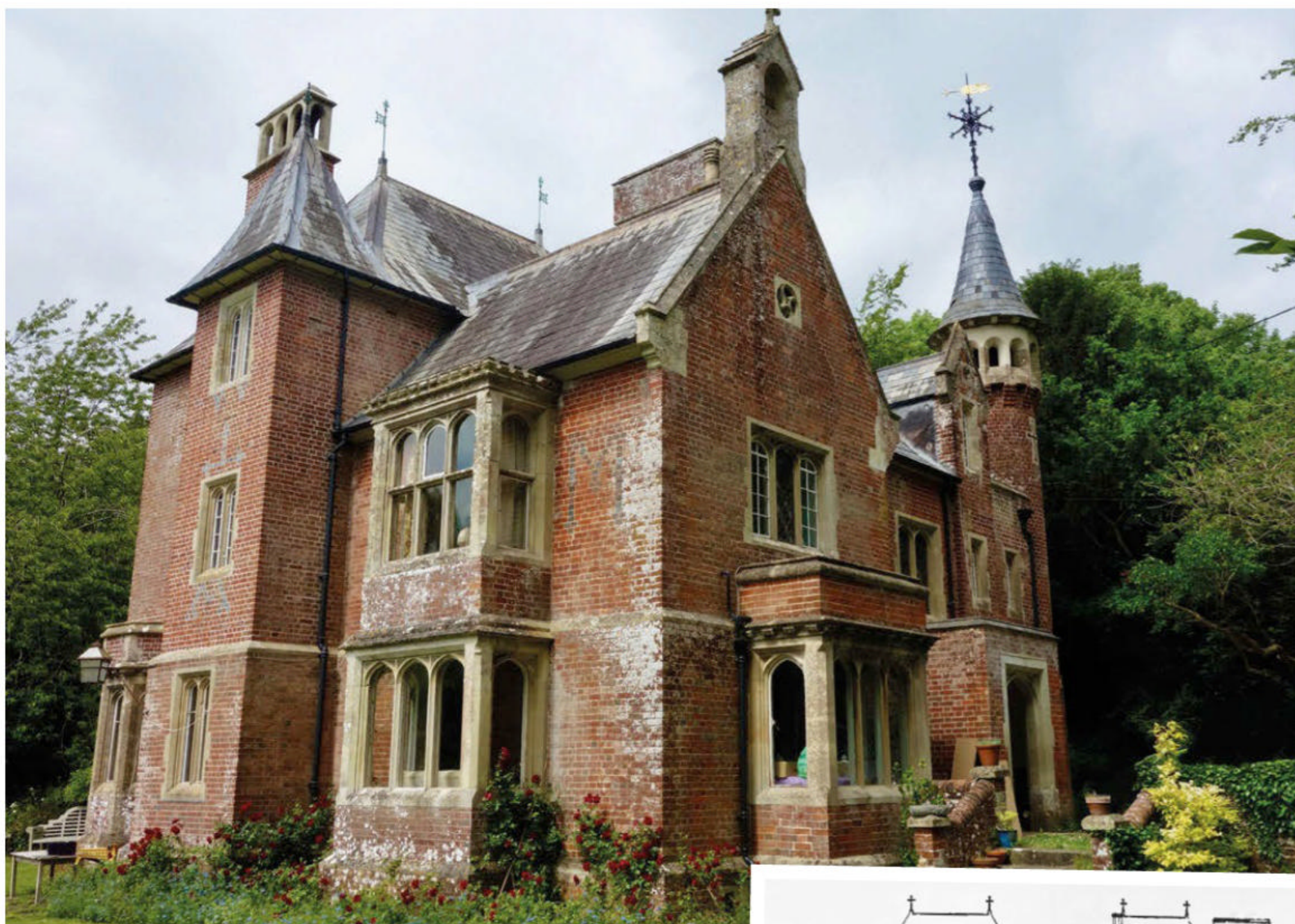
Pugin would have been a familiar sight around the city in his distinctive sailor's

smock. It was there in 1834 that he secured his first architectural commission. Sampson Payne, a china and glass merchant, engaged him to restore the vestibule of the medieval John Halle's Hall in New Canal. A book published that year, *Picturesque Memorials of Salisbury*, stated that 'the restoration of this splendid and interesting room... is the result of most careful study and measurement, without any alteration whatever, beyond the removal of temporary and incongruous obstructions.' Pugin's talent for delegation is demonstrated by his engaging Thomas Willement, 'the father of Victorian stained glass' to restore the windows.

Today this work can be seen for the price of a trip to the pictures. In 1931 the hall became the foyer of the new Gaumont Cinema – now the Odeon. No other cinema can have such an entrance.

John Halle's Hall on New Canal in Salisbury which is home to the Odeon cinema.





In May 1834, Pugin made what might appear an unwise career move when he became a Roman Catholic. It was only five years since a limited number of Catholics had obtained the vote and they were still subject to widespread prejudice and hostility. He was received into the church in the little chapel of St Martin in St Anne's Street. In 1797 it was noted that the congregation included some 30 refugees from France. Pugin recorded his conversion in a taciturn note: "Finished alterations at Chapel received into Catholic Church."

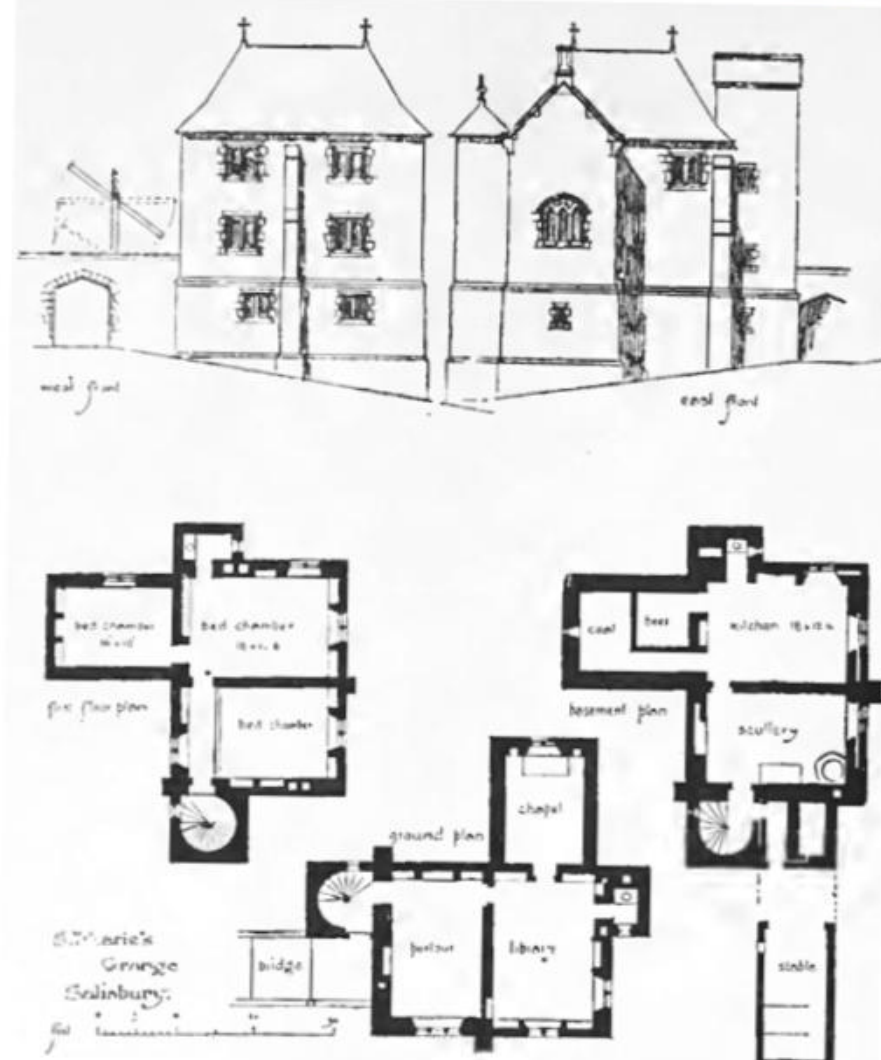
Pugin's father had died in 1832 and his mother a year later, so he had been left sufficient resources to embark upon an ambitious project. In 1835, he bought a half-acre of land at Alderbury, a mile outside the city, 'a beautiful site on a southward-sloping bank, looking across water-meadows with willows and alder to the dark trees of Longford Park and to the rising chalk uplands with their crowning clump on the Hampshire border'.

There he built St Marie's Grange on the road to Southampton. It set the pattern for the villas that would adorn Victorian suburbs. It still stands but is little-known even in Salisbury and has been described as 'a house of ideas rather than vivid imagination'. It

deserves recognition, if only because it is the first building designed by this prolific and hugely influential architect. The square tower bears Pugin's initials – AWP – in purple brick. In best medieval style, it was surrounded by a moat with a drawbridge.

That June a competition was announced to design the new Palace of Westminster. An aversion with unfashionable neo-classicism – now too readily associated with revolutionary events in France and America – dictated that the huge new building should be in the Gothic or Elizabethan style, which was more in keeping with Parliament's ancient history. Well-established architect Charles Barry asked Pugin to assist him with designs for the competition.

Although still only 23 and with little practical architectural experience, he had established himself as an authority on Gothic. While in Salisbury, he published his



Saint-Marie's Grange in Alderbury which was built on land purchased in 1835, the first building designed by Augustus Pugin. The square tower bears the architect's initials AWP.

HISTORY

seminal work, *Contrasts*, which brought a moral dimension to the profession as the first architectural manifesto. It had a profound influence on the next three generations of architects, reflecting a revulsion against the dehumanising effects of the industrial revolution and looking back to a supposed golden age when values were more humane.

To Pugin's advantage, entries to the competition were to be submitted anonymously – it was unlikely the committee would award the contract to a Papist. Over the following months the two architects worked on their plans, with Pugin creating more than 10,000 drawings.

‘His father was the ‘true’ architect of the building’

After a shortlist was compiled from the 97 entries, design number 64 – Barry and Pugin's submission – was unanimously declared the winner. Barry received £1,500, of which he gave £400 to Pugin. Was that enough? Apparently not, in 1867 Pugin's son Edward averred that his father was the ‘true’ architect of the iconic building.

Certainly the lavish interiors are his, Barry was probably responsible for the footprint and overall administration of the project but most of the rest was down to Pugin, including the commissioning of the skilled craftsmen who created the building.

In 1837 Pugin moved back to London and sold St Marie's Grange at a considerable loss. But his work in Wiltshire was not done. According to Benjamin Ferrey, he designed the lodge and west gates at Clarendon Park Lodge for Sir Frederick Hervey-Bathurst.



A tragedy produced another commission when on December 1, 1842, while Rev George Montgomery, Rector of St Mary the Virgin's Church at Bishopstone, was inspecting work on the church designed by Benjamin Ferrey, a vault collapsed and he was buried under three tons of masonry.

The unfortunate rector shared Pugin's

Augustus Pugin created more than 10,000 drawings for the the Palace of Westminster.

interest in antiquity and his passion for beautifying churches so his widow had no doubts about asking his friend, by now an architect of great eminence, to design her husband's tomb. He created a gem of Gothic tracery.

By the 1840s the Catholic congregation in Salisbury had outgrown its little chapel. A site in Exeter Street, opposite the cathedral gates, was purchased by a local solicitor, John Lambert, who was to be the city's first Catholic mayor since the Reformation.

Pugin was commissioned to design a church dedicated to St Osmond, the builder of Salisbury's first cathedral and created a building in 14th century Gothic style. Much of his work on the internal fabric has been removed over the years but the south altar, his stained-glass windows and the ornate font remain.

He died in 1852, possibly from the effects of syphilis contracted in his youth. In the words of a biographer, he had packed 100 years into 40, designing more than 100 buildings, including three cathedrals. Yet the most iconic of his creations had its origins in Salisbury.

Next time you hear Big Ben strike, just think of Augustus Pugin working away at St Marie's Grange, creating the designs for the mother of parliaments.

WL



St Osmund's church on Exeter Street in Salisbury designed by Pugin in the 14th century Gothic style.



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How Hitler helped create plumbers and brickies

For 30 years a unique free boarding school gave Wiltshire boys a grounding in construction. Former pupil Terry Grace recalls how the outbreak of war led to it being there and how it shaped the future of many of its pupils.

IT WAS 1961 AND 12-year-old me had just passed an exam. There was a degree of satisfaction but that was more than balanced with a different emotion – that of terror. I had passed the first stage of entry to The Adcroft School of Building.

Adcroft was a boarding school in Trowbridge and seemed like the end of the earth to a somewhat over protected schoolboy who had been educated at the village in East Gomeldon before attending Highbury Avenue School in Salisbury.

I remember the months between passing the exam and actually arriving at the school gates being a very mixed bag of emotions.

I couldn't have known then the part Adolf Hitler had played in my forthcoming three years of education. In 1940 the Hammersmith School of Building and Arts and Crafts, was forced to evacuate London and found itself in Trowbridge. The school, led by headmaster GAF Clarke, overcame staffing problems and set up in a school that had been condemned, with sleeping quarters in a church hall, and achieved a high standard of attainment throughout the war.

In wartime the school was under the regime of the London County Council but after the war it was taken over by Wiltshire County Council and moved to Prospect Place, formerly Adcroft Boys School, to become The Adcroft School of Building. The Hammersmith School of Building returned to London post-war and continued until 1975 when it was incorporated into the Chelsea College of Art and Design.

Adcroft was residential and free to all boys in Wiltshire (with the exception of the Swindon area) who could satisfy the standard requirements of the examination taken at 12. It was aimed at those having failed the 11+ examination but who it was felt would benefit from an amalgam of formal education and practical training.

My only real memories of entry day are being left in the dormitory with one other pupil who had also arrived early. To say the first few weeks were a shock to the system would be a great understatement.

The school was run on army lines, possibly because of the influence of war and National Service on the staff. We would hear the alarm bell at 6.55am and have to rise immediately. While half of the dormitory would be about their ablutions the remainder would start on making bed packs.

Clockwise: The British School of Building 1832; Hammersmith School of Building and Arts and Crafts; The Adcroft School of Building, Trowbridge.





Examples of skills taught at Adcroft from plaster work making a ceiling rose (above) to leadwork which would be displayed on open days.

These along with many other things were inspected, with rulers sometimes being employed to check the correct dimensions. The beds were then moved to the centre for sweeping, dusting and floor polishing, all of which was also inspected before breakfast.

‘We would have hitch-hiking races to Bristol or Westbury’

So akin to army life was this regime, even punishments took the form and name of being “on jankers”, military slang meaning being confined to barracks or withdrawal of privileges. This was often coupled with labour of some sort and repeat offenders would be employed at gardening or digging out an old air-raid shelter.

Some pupils were homesick in those first few weeks but any outward signs quickly dissipated, mainly because we were kept busy with little time to feel sorry for ourselves. To acclimatise us to our new lifestyle, we were allowed home on Sundays for the first few weeks. But later we would often choose not to go home.

This was because Adcroft was something of a contradiction – on one hand there was this often Draconian regime and on the other a degree of freedom, which for a 13 year old boy was most enlightening. We had free time provided the cleaning inspection was passed, and on Sundays after church, if we were not going home, we were allowed to do as we wished.

There seemed to be absolutely no restrictions on where we could go or what we could do and coming from a sheltered village life it was a revelation to be able to investigate the great metropolis of Trowbridge. I had never even seen a park before.

Hitch-hiking was a favourite way of getting around and sometimes we would have hitch-hiking races to Bristol or Westbury.

The aim of the school was to provide technical training in all forms of building skills and trades, together with a high standard of academic teaching. It also dedicated a great deal of time to games and PE. This busy curriculum meant the school day lasted until 5.20pm.

In the first year we experienced five different building trades – brickwork, plumbing, plastering, carpentry, and painting and decorating. Three of these were selected by each student in the second year with a single trade studied in the final year. A leaver’s certificate entitled the holder to a one-year reduction in the length of an apprenticeship.

There was an element of arts and crafts to our learning and we learned how to “run” elaborate plaster mouldings, how to cast decorative gutter boxes, make panels resemble woodgrain or marble to use decorative bonds and arches in brickwork.



Much emphasis was placed on the theory of building construction and techniques, including technical drawing and draughtsmanship, and many pupils chose this as a profession. Evening activities were also part of the education and although mostly created for pleasure, there were also social pursuits such as ballroom dancing and drama productions.

Food played an important part of school life and in general it did not disappoint. We had four meals a day, three of them involving something cooked, and all prepared on-site. I never remember being hungry.

Throughout most of its history GAF Clarke was headmaster and it seems the school’s continued existence was in no small part due to him. He was progressive in his outlook and on the development of the school but when he died in 1969, its demise also began. With no one to champion the establishment the council withdrew its finances and it closed in 1971.

I chose not to seek a career in building, eventually ending up in science and working at Porton Down for 32 years. But my chosen trade in my final year – carpentry and joinery – became very useful in the three extensions I added to my various houses and has provided me with many hobbies. I have also yet to need to call out a plumber or an electrician.

Many of my fellow pupils did go on to be accomplished tradesmen or business owners and the training they received was of paramount importance. But talking to some, I think most would say their time there prepared them for life and, like me, they are grateful for the experience.

WL

Repair cafes are bringing lost skills back to life

TV's *The Repair Shop* has brought mending and making do back into vogue but Wiltshire already had thriving repair cafes long before Jay Blades and co got going. Gary Lawrence spoke to some of their organisers.

ON THE first weekend of every month the faithful pour through the doors of the City Gate Church in search of salvation, resurrection – and maybe even the odd miracle.

But it is not their souls they want saving, it's their toasters, kettles, jumpers and lamps – for their pilgrimage is to the Salisbury Repair Café.

Open now for three years, and for the last 12 months or so in the church's Quench café on the Churchfields industrial estate, the café has assembled a team of 20 repairers who offer their services in exchange for a voluntary donation. It was founded with the aid of a Wiltshire Council grant by Benji Goehl and Jimmy Walker and has completed more than 500 repairs – preventing all of those seemingly broken items from ending up in landfill.

Benji has since moved away and Jimmy now concentrates on bike repairs so the organising is now taken care of by Kathy Cininas and Jono Byrne. They marshal not just the repairers but a team of 25 other volunteers who run the café and take care of admin.

Covid forced them to introduce an online booking system but it has remained in place to make life easier for the repairers. "At the very beginning people would just turn up but



PHOTO: SPENCER MULHOLLAND PHOTOGRAPHY

The Salisbury Repair Cafe opening in November 2019 with co-founders Jimmy Walker and Benji Goehl standing behind then Mayor of Salisbury John Walsh.

the booking system is better for the repairers, even though it is quite onerous to organise,” says Kathy.

“The repairers like it because they know what’s coming and they can prepare ahead.”

Users book in their item according to the nature of the repair needed – general repairs, fabric, bicycles, musical instruments, bookbinding or jewellery. They are then allocated a time slot and can either watch the repair being made or have a drink and a cake in the café.

Regular items brought in include lamps, radios, clocks, kettles, toasters and, when the weather is warmer, bikes. But everyday items aren’t the only thing the café recycles – it is also bringing lost skills back to the fore.

The majority of the repairers are retired and in possession of know-how that has been neglected in a consumerist world where the first notion when something breaks is to replace it. But, like, the things they resurrect, they have found a new lease of life in showcasing their abilities.

“Many men come to define themselves through work so retirement can be difficult to navigate,” says Jono. “With some of our volunteers it’s wonderful to see them and how committed they are to helping people and demonstrating the skills they have acquired.

“Some of our electrical and electronics engineers are just incredibly qualified people but all our repairers are people who from a point of principle feel uncomfortable about the wasteful consumer products lifestyle that we all lead – the idea that something’s not working so it’s cheaper to go on Amazon and buy a new one.”

The organisers are at pains to make sure the repairers feel appreciated. “One of the things we are conscious of is looking after the volunteers, we want their experience to be fun, positive and rewarding and that’s why we have people keep coming back,” says Kathy. “We also now open half an hour earlier and finish earlier so we can have a shared lunch.”

Adds Jono: “The reason they come back I think is for the atmosphere and to belong to the group. It is a really strong group and everyone is really proud of the café and what it does. But we are always looking for more.”

As well as using their gifts, the repairers get a buzz from sharing them. “We had one lad who tried to mend a hole in his jeans,” recalls Kathy. “He hadn’t done a great job but he’d tried. He sat with the sewing team and they taught him how to do it.

Top to bottom, left to right: Bookbinding expert Ken Smith at work; A buckled wheel proves no obstacle for Salisbury Repair Cafe co-founder Jimmy Walker; electronics experts David Sperry and David Pedley put their heads together; Val Compton, Lynda Smith, and Elaine Walker-Gunns of the fabric team.





“We had an older gentleman in his late 80s whose wife had died and he was having to teach himself how to do things himself like sew a button on or change a battery and he came to us for help. He would come to us every single month with something he needed.”

While some of the repairs can be complicated, others are less taxing. “People come to have a button sewn on and you think ‘how can somebody not know how to do that?’,” says Kathy.

Jono interjects: “Actually I’ve brought in something that just needed a button sewing on, I’ve got to hold my hand up there,” he laughs, adding, “if you don’t believe you can do it, you just won’t, it’s all about confidence.”

The group has 700 newsletter subscribers and 1,200 Facebook followers so the need for the café is obvious but Kathy and Jono are having to think hard about its future in the face of rising costs.

“We have been treated very generously by the guys who let us use their venue but they have had to say to us they can’t give us that favourable rate any longer so the cost is doubling,” says Jono. “We are going to have to find a way to meet that.”

The booking system, while making life simpler, also reduces the number of jobs they can do. “On average we get £7 donation per job we attempt,” says Jono. “By a rough calculation we are having to do 25 to 30 jobs just to cover our costs.

“That starts to get pretty tricky because some months we have only done 30 jobs. Last month we did about 45 and we are going to have to keep that going – so we will have to make sure there are enough online slots and that we have organised the repairers so we can get that throughput. That’s the challenge going forward.”

Trowbridge’s Repair Café, run by Trowbridge Environmental Community in the town hall once a quarter, is also at

something of a crossroads at the end of a wildly successful first year.

It was launched with £4,000 funding from the Bath and West Community Energy Fund, which allowed it to pay repairers a small fee for attending and offer repairs for free, although some people do leave donations.

But the grant is almost spent and the town hall is due to close for two years for major refurbishment in the summer, so the

‘You never know what you are going to get’

group needs a permanent home for insurance purposes and to find a way to cover costs. It leaves treasurer Zoe Newing-Moore and her fellow organisers with some thinking to do.

“The café was amazingly successful the very first time and it’s been a success every time, we’ve been astounded by it,” she says. “We now have a really good bank of repairers and volunteers so when we go forward we will already have volunteers who’ve seen it in action.

“We are looking at possible venues and we might be a bit more active about asking people to contribute but we will definitely carry on.”

The four cafes it has run so far were themed, with the first being combined with a Big Community Grow seed swap and the others focusing on clothes, bikes and, most recently, toys – although all repairs are welcomed.

“We have one or two repairers in each area – there are two sewers, two electrical, a bicycle person, a knife sharpener and whoever else turns up on the day,” says Zoe. “I think

Above: Bike repairers, sewing and electronics experts focus on the job at the Trowbridge Repair Café.

part of the enjoyment for the repairers is because they like the surprise and you never know what you are going to get.”

She says the café has demonstrated the shoddy state of much of what is on sale in shops. “We get quite a lot of electrical goods we can’t fix and that is certainly one of the things this has highlighted to us – how bad stuff is made in the first instance and how throwaway a lot of things are,” she says.

“There should be legislation to make things more repairable and more durable.”

She eschews comparisons with TV’s The Repair Shop, saying it promotes the wrong message about what it is there for. “One of the things that frustrates me about the Repair Shop programme is that all of it is centred around repairing sentimental objects,” she says. “The point of a repair café is to stop things going to landfill, save you money and be useful every day.

“It almost pushes the idea that it’s only for special objects and it’s only if you are really, really skilled and that’s not what we are trying to say. It’s for everyone and you can learn to do it on all of your objects at home. If you are going to throw it away anyway, you might as well open it up and have a go, you can’t make it worse.”

WL

- To find out more about upcoming repair cafes and book a slot in Salisbury, or to volunteer, go to salisburyrepaircafe.org or search on Facebook. To find out about future dates and a venue for the Trowbridge café go to trowbridgeeco.com/repair-cafe/. There are also cafes at Bradford on Avon (email boa@shareandrepair.org.uk); Chippenham, Malmesbury and Laver (search on Facebook).

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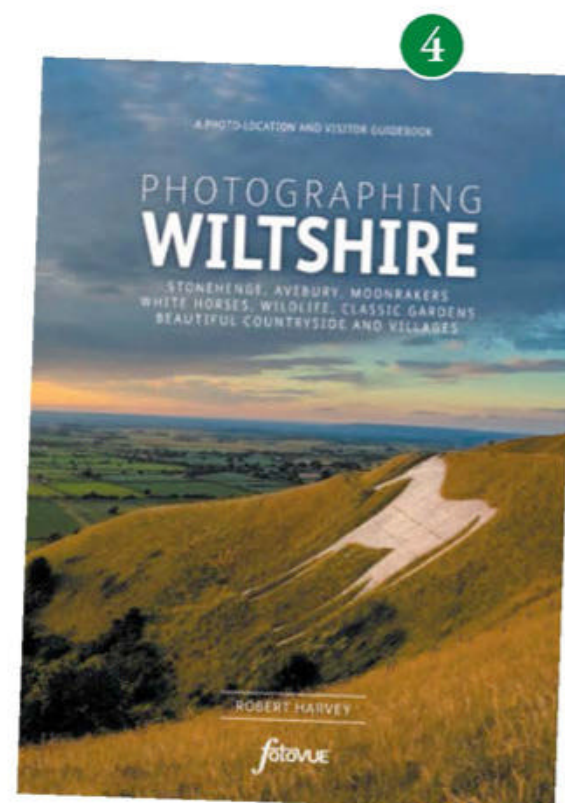
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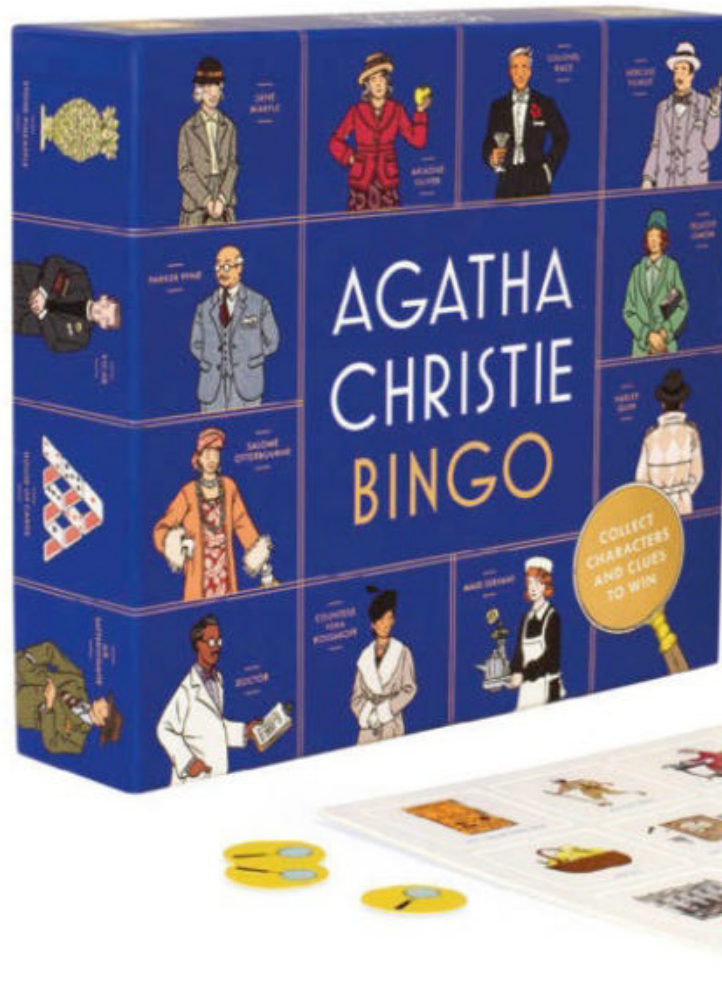
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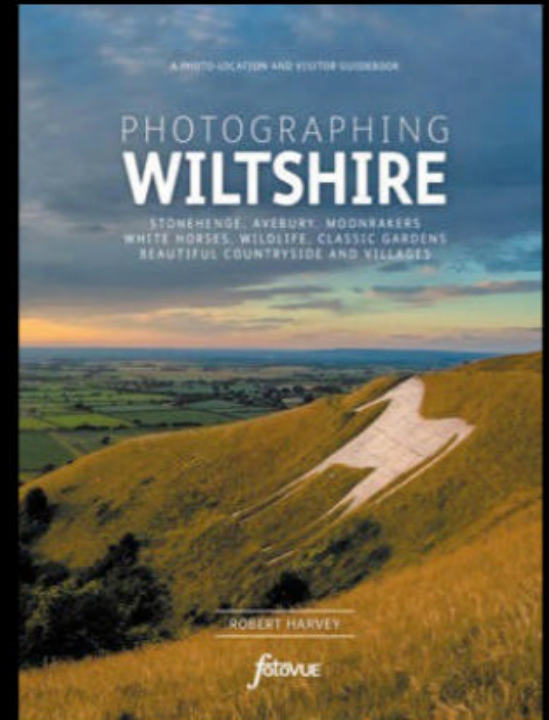
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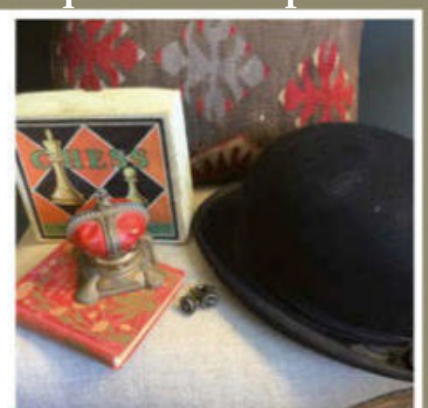
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6



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6. Downton Distillery Explorer's Gin

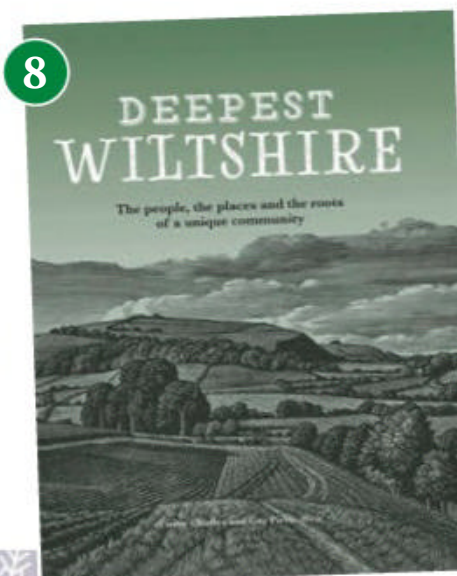
Inspired by the Golden Age of exploration, discover Explorer's Gin, Wiltshire's award winning premium spirit. It is refined, elegant, bursting with citrus, pine, warming spices and is finished with the gin clear waters of the chalk downs. We provide refills for your bottle so you never have to throw your bottle away.

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www.diggerandmojo.com



8

8. Deepest Wiltshire

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www.deepestbooks.co.uk

9. Give the gift of nature

Share the joy of nature with someone special this Christmas by giving them the gift of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust membership. Individual, joint or family memberships are available from just £30 per year.

www.wiltshirewildlife.org



9



10



10. Sorted! A handy book of helpful hints and hacks

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New Year's Eve supper

Rupert, Taylor the executive head chef at Bowood Hotel, Spa and Golf Resort shares this delicious recipe, perfect for a dinner party main course.

Braised Duck Leg, Charred Sprouts, Bacon, Chestnuts, Merlot Sauce

IF YOU are planning a get-together to celebrate the New Year, then why not try this easy to prepare recipe which is sure to impress your guests – and a perfect way to use up any extra sprouts. WL

Ingredients

For the Braised Duck Legs:

- 4 duck legs
- vegetable oil
- 2 large onions, large dice
- 1 head of garlic, cut in half
- 4 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 25g of salt
- 2l chicken stock

For the Charred sprouts:

- 2 litres water
- 40g salt
- 500g of Brussels sprouts
- olive oil
- 1 orange, zested
- 100g of cooked chestnuts, chopped
- 150g of pancetta lardons
- black pepper

For the Merlot sauce:

- 50g button mushrooms
- 50g shallots
- 1 garlic clove
- 200ml Merlot red wine
- 500ml good beef stock
- 50g butter

To serve:

- Potatoes for mash

For the braised duck legs:

1. To braise the duck legs, heat a little vegetable oil in the base of a large pan on a medium to high heat.
2. Add the onions, thyme, bay, salt and garlic and sweat for 5 minutes. Add the duck legs and enough chicken stock to cover.
3. Bring the pan to the boil and reduce to a very gentle simmer.
4. Place into the oven at 150°C for 2-3 hours, or until the tender to touch.
5. Allow to cool in the liquid. Once cool, remove the knuckle and trim the skin off the bottom of the drumstick. Place on to an oven tray, skin side down.
6. When ready to serve turn the duck leg over and place in a hot oven or under a grill to crisp up the skin.

For the charred sprouts:

1. Prep the sprouts by removing any dirty outer leaves. Bring a pan of salted water to the boil and cook for 3-5 minutes, then plunge into ice water.
2. Once cool, drain, pat dry with kitchen roll and cut in half. Fry the pancetta in a large non-stick frying pan until nicely brown and crisp. Remove and set aside.
3. Drizzle some olive oil into the pan and turn up the heat. Add the sprouts cut side down and pan fry for 5 minutes until nice and charred, stir through the pancetta and chestnuts.
4. Grate over orange zest and season with pepper.

For the Merlot sauce:

1. Sauté of the shallots, garlic and mushrooms until soft and golden. Add the red wine and reduce by two-thirds.
2. Add the beef stock and thyme and reduce by half.
3. Pass the sauce through a fine strainer and whisk in the butter.

• www.bowood.org
Tel: 01249 822228

Serves 6



Zesty delight

Leigh Evans is executive chef at The Old Bell Hotel in Malmesbury, here he shares his recipe for a refreshing dessert, perfect for a New Year's Eve dinner party.

Ingredients

For the Lemon posset:

- 3 Lemons, zest and juice
- 200g Caster sugar
- 600ml Double cream

For the Lime Curd:

- 6 Limes, juice and zest
- 5 Eggs
- 300g Sugar
- 1tsp Corn flour
- 250g Butter

For the Meringue Kisses:

- 100g Egg whites
- 100g Caster sugar
- 100g Icing sugar

For the Crème Fraiche Sorbet:

- 150ml Water
- 45g Glucose
- 175g Sugar
- 250g Crème Fraiche
- 35g Lemon juice

Lemon Posset - meringue, lime curd, crème fraiche sorbet

THIS DESSERT can be made ahead of your dinner party. Most elements can sit in the fridge, so you only need to take them out just before serving. WL

For the lemon posset:

1. Add all ingredients to a saucepan and place on a high heat
2. Simmer until you see the mixture thicken
3. Set into a rubber mould and freeze
4. Pop out of mould once frozen and store in the fridge

For the lime curd:

1. Beat together the eggs, sugar and cornflour until mixed
2. In saucepan on a medium heat add the egg mix and the juice of the limes
3. Stir and cook out until it coats the back of a spoon.
4. Take off the heat and whisk in the butter in small chunks
5. Chill in the fridge until needed

For the Meringue Kisses:

1. With an electric whisk, whisk the egg whites until stiff peak
2. Slowly add the caster sugar, continuing to whisk
3. With a metal spoon, fold in the icing sugar gently, trying not to knock the meringue back too much
4. Put into a piping bag and pipe into small peaks. Bake at 70°C until crisp

For the crème fraiche sorbet:

1. Bring the water, sugar and glucose to the boil.
2. Cool in the fridge
3. Once cool, add the crème fraiche and the lemon juice. Mix well.
4. Churn in an ice cream churning and freeze.

Once you have all elements, plate up as cheffy as you can.

• www.oldbellhotel.co.uk
Tel: 01666 822344

The Old Cheeseroom

Julianna Sedli is an artisan cheesemaker based on the Neston Park Estate. It is an ideal location – she only has to cross the farmyard to collect milk which is supplied by the estate's herd of Jersey cows for the cheesemaking process. Here she guides us through her cheeses, perfect for a dinner party – or infact at any time of day.

IT IS lovely to be part of an estate which preserves the land, and traditional ways. We create our own tradition by producing different types of French style cheeses whilst bringing out the best of Wiltshire dairy tradition and everything that influenced me or my husband during this journey.

We are passionate about what we do here and each of these cheeses represents just that when making and producing them.

Here is a guide to our five different cheeses.

Baronet

This is our signature cheese, it is based on Reblochon - the French Haut-Savoie cheese. It is creamy, buttery, elastic, and quite subtle when it comes to a washed rind cheese.

It is pasteurised but even then, you can taste the freshness of the pastures' different plants in spring and summer. It has a definite floral note and a slight suggestion of citrus. In the autumn and winter the grazing is reduced and the cheese has a rich buttery, creamy taste. Baronet is a semi-soft cheese with a lovely pale-yellow core.

The Old Cheeseroom selection.

Lypiatt

This is a lockdown-born addition to our range. I trained as a goat cheese maker for more than seven years, in Indiana, USA then Timsbury and Pylle, Somerset.

I absolutely loved making mould-ripened, goat cheeses: Sofia, Pyper's Pyramid, Tynsboro.

My husband must have been fed up with me keeping talking about those cheeses and memories, and one day he made a mould ripened, geo-coated, ash-covered cheese from organic Jersey cow's milk. Pure creaminess - delicious addition to any cheeseboard.

Bybrook

Is from a real love of a few French alpine cheeses. We did pretty good research on their recipes and we combined them and adapted them to our organic Jersey milk and Wiltshire climate.

It is fruity, nutty with lovely eyes formed in the paste. We oil the cheeses until they form their rind. It's a hard cheese - continental, alpine style. It has a sweet taste and long-lasting lingering flavour

Jersey Curd

This is probably the simplest cheese to make. It is overnight set and was traditionally made by the farmer's wife, who used to curdle the milk and drain it the next morning.

This cream cheese – fresh, silky and versatile in its uses. This time of the year, it is a perfect match with smoked salmon.

Culpeper

Named after the 17th century English botanist, herbalist, physician and astrologer Nicholas Culpeper.

It is a small round Jersey milk cheese, rolled in herbs and mould-ripened (geotrichum). It has a fresh herby taste while young and gathers interesting flavours as it ages.

It was born from us having oversized Lypiatt cheeses, which we had to cut to size so that they wouldn't mature differently. We started off with Herbes de Provence, which we soon changed to a mixture of English herbs. WL

• *The Old Cheese Room Ltd, Neston Park, Corsham, SN13 9TG. Tel: 07531 060 936 www.theoldcheeseroom.com*



Any port in a storm

Grant Berry from Yapp Brothers wine merchants says port should be a drink for all seasons – here he shares a selection of a few of his favourite varieties.

SUNDAY TIMES wine guru Will Lyons recently lamented the lack of port drunk outside the festive season. Will suggested that ‘port offers a variety of styles to suit all sorts of occasions. A sentiment I wholeheartedly echo.

It got me to thinking - why isn't port (and other fortified wines) drunk year-round?

My suspicion is that over the Christmas period, such luxuries are considered ‘permitted’ as part of our seasonal over-indulgence. Perhaps it's my Gallic roots, but I hold hard to the philosophy of ‘a little bit of what you fancy does you good’ whatever time of year. I was heartened to be backed up by eminent physician Professor David Khayat, who titled his 2021 bestseller *Don't Deprive Yourself (Arrêtez de vous priver)*. Launched to much fanfare, screaming headlines proclaimed ‘Eat frites. Drink wine. Have sex.’ (*The Times*, February 2021). According to the good Prof, depriving oneself of treats causes more emotional damage than enjoying activities, foods or drinks that could be considered bad for us: “it is to say that excesses are possible from time to time, but that you need a balance in your life, and that life without pleasure makes no sense.”

So, with that in mind, I'm planning to drink fortified wines all year long in 2023.

Summer is made for white port and tonic – though it works equally well through the winter as a refreshing, lower-alcohol alternative to a G&T. Taylor's Chip Dry (Waitrose, £13.99) has a touch of vanilla and coconut – garnish with a sprig of mint. Tawny port has a little more nutty weight to it with some rich raisin and spice notes. It's perfect to enliven a creamy mushroom pasta sauce, only a splash, mind – then enjoy a small glass with the dish.

Supermarket own-brand tawnies offer incredible value and are bottled for them by the top port shippers, especially the Tesco and Sainsbury's premium options. I've a soft spot for Warre's seductive Otimia ‘10 Years Old’ (Whisky Exchange, £16.75) though if funds allow, sipping their Christmas spice-scented ‘20 Years Old’ feels like sinking into a goose-down duvet in front of a roaring fire with a large hunk of mature cheddar.

Winter vines in the Douro Valley, Portugal where port producing grapes are grown.

When a little palate-sharpener or digestif of berry fruit goodness is needed, LBV (late-bottled vintage) ports offer a turbo-charged style of vintage port (no decade ageing required). I'm very fond of offerings from Quinta do Noval, Taylor's and Graham's but the sheer exuberance and hedonism of Fonseca's LBV edges it for me (Yapp Brothers, £16.75). All ports will keep in the fridge for about a month or more – an occasional small glass with a square or two of very dark chocolate (it must be healthy?) enlivens the darkest of winter evenings.

Sticking with the Portuguese theme, Madeira should not be simply an addition to sauces – with styles ranging from sweet, piercingly dry and everything in between, it's a brilliant base for cocktails, versatile partner to Szechuan cuisine and surprisingly well with a chargrilled steak. The Wine Society has a nice concise range with good detail on sweetness levels (£14.95-£62). Try Blandy's Verdelho as a medium option with bright coffee and caramel notes (£20).

Staying in Iberia, south-west Spain's sherry triangle near Cadiz remains an excellent source of value. Sherry is definitely not all sweet and suits almost all food, not just tapas. I'm a big fan of bone-dry Manzanilla from Sanlúcar

de Barrameda – ‘La Gitana’ bottling from Bodegas Hidalgo is widely available (from £8.50). It is as green apple-crisp as they come so ideal with anchovies, olives, almonds, and Iberico ham (not in one mouthful). It can turn a creamy chicken casserole epic with a drop or two and used in a sherry martini (1 part sherry to 2 parts gin), it only requires a twist of lemon or ham sliver as a garnish. **WL**

• www.yapp.co.uk



Shake out the old year and stir in the new!

See in the New Year in style by impressing your guests with this selection of cocktails from the team at Ramsbury Estate Distillery – tailor-made for toasting.



Hive-Ball

Ingredients

- 50ml vodka
- 10ml lemon Juice
- 10ml Honey syrup
- Top with soda water
- Lemon zest and rosemary to garnish

Method

1. Make the honey syrup by adding equal parts of honey (250g) and water (250ml) in a small saucepan and heat until the honey is completely dissolved. Cool and store in an airtight container and keep refrigerated).
2. Fill glass with ice. Add all ingredients. Top with soda water. Garnish with a lemon zest and sprig of rosemary.

Estate Snapper

Ingredients

- 50ml gin
- 100ml tomato Juice
- 10ml Sherry
- 5ml pickled Onion Brine
- Pinch of sea salt
- 10 dashes of Worcestershire sauce
- 5 dashes of hot sauce
- Rosemary, basil and a slice of chilli to garnish

Method

1. Add all ingredients to shaker with ice. Use a roll technique (rotate the tins over and over) several times to create dilution. Pour into the glass filled with fresh ice cubes.

Rams' Bees Knees

Ingredients

- 50ml gin
- 15ml lemon
- 10ml ginger liqueur
- 10ml Honey syrup
- Lemon disc to garnish

Method

1. Make the honey syrup by adding equal parts of honey (250g) and water (250ml) in a small saucepan and heat until the honey is completely dissolved. Cool and store in an airtight container and keep refrigerated).
2. Add all ingredients to shaker with ice. Shake and fine strain into chilled glass. Garnish with a lemon disc.

Scatter and sow

Garden designer and beekeeper Sophie Butcher describes how to create your own wildflower meadow at home or with a local community group.

AS CHILDREN, our grandparents experienced abundant wildflower meadows teeming with pollinators of every kind. Unfortunately, around 97% of the UK's wildflower meadows have disappeared since the second world war, so the experience for our children is vastly impoverished.

The new buzz word is 'rewilding'. Typically, a quarter of the area of a town (and half its green space) is private gardens, so the potential of these as a resource for wildlife is huge. And rewilding can be beautiful. Turning part of your garden into a nature reserve is easy. A patch of wildflowers is a great start.

What if you don't have a garden?

'It is almost more liberating if you don't have a garden,' says Paul Jupp, director of Meadow In My Garden, a not-for-profit community interest company. Paul works all over the UK with councils, schools, volunteer groups, community farms, landowners and homeowners to create wildflower meadows.

'There are many ways to get involved in rewilding public places,' he continues. 'For example, at Quaker's Walk in Devizes three years ago, whole families turned out one day in October to help plant 10,000 daffodil bulbs provided by the council.'

Other ways to get involved include transforming a scruffy patch in your neighbourhood and planting trees around your streets. Find more ideas here: <https://bit.ly/wl2301rewild1>

You can tap into an existing community group, such as Frome council's The Wild Bunch (<https://bit.ly/wl2301rewild2>), or start one of your own. Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has a searchable volunteering page with many opportunities to get stuck in. www.wiltshirewildlife.org



Above: Freshford station flower meadow. Right: Freshford station before work starts

Rewilding can be simpler than you imagine and, as Paul says, you will be providing a vital food source for 'ecosystem service providers' – basically all flying insects – which are having a particularly hard time now.

There are two windows of opportunity: March to early May, and September to October – and three approaches to transforming a patch – say your lawn into a more productive place for pollinators. The first approach is to mow less, the second is to plant wildflowers into grass, the third, to remove the grass to create a completely new community of plants.

Mow less

With the first approach, you may be surprised at what pops up given a chance. The aim is to mow just two or three times a year. Your first cut might be in March, when the grass is growing vigorously and there are no signs of wildflowers emerging. Daisies, clover, dandelions and black medic are among a wide range of wildflowers that may already be thriving in your lawn if you give them a chance to flower.

'The second cut is in late July early August. Let the flowers drop their seeds before mowing,' says Paul, 'about five to six weeks after the last main flush of flowers.'



You might mow again in October if the grass keeps pushing up strongly. But before you mow, check what may still be thriving – if you see the morning dew caught in a lattice work of spider webs, mowing then could damage a whole community of insects, so you might delay your final mow to a dry day in late November.'

And if the grass feels too shaggy for words, then mow some artful paths through it and perhaps around the edge. This may even give you a second flush of flowers in the mown patches, while giving you an intentional rather than an unkempt and neglected look.

Sowing in grass

You can't simply scatter seeds over an existing lawn and hope for the best although, with the second approach, you can plant bulbs into it, such as crocuses, daffodils, fritillaria meleagris (if the soil is damp), camassias, and species tulips like *Tulipa tarda*, which naturalise easily and can be left undisturbed from year to year.

PHOTOS: PAUL JUPP, WWW.MEADOWINMYGARDEN.CO.UK

A slightly different (possibly in parallel) approach is to plant yellow rattle. This pretty wildflower attaches to grass roots and suppresses grass vigour, creating space for other species to colonise naturally. Yellow rattle is an annual and flowers throughout the spring and summer. Its dry seed pods rattle, hence the name. It sheds seeds from July, which germinate the following spring, becoming new plants that continue to suppress grass growth.

Paul advises that rattle must be sown with this year's seeds, ideally in the autumn before Christmas – it needs a cold spell to spark germination. Alternatively, sow it in spring after putting the seeds in the fridge for 10 days. Yellow rattle needs existing grass in order to thrive because it is actually a grass parasite. Start in the autumn (or spring) by cutting the grass very short and scarifying it aggressively – you want your lawn looking like it has had a hard rugby match played on it. Into this 'mess' you broadcast 0.1-1g of seed per square meter and roll or tread it in. If it is dry, water for the first three weeks once a day or every other day. Mow next in late August/early September on a high setting after collecting as many seeds as you can and resowing these into bare patches of earth.

Create a new community of plants

The key to the third approach is diagnosis and seed selection. Diagnosis is about identifying the conditions – are you on chalk, sand or clay? Is it dry or permanently wet? Is it in shade or bright sun? Is it below trees and shrubs?

Below: Quakers Walk, Devizes; stripping away the grass, wildflower sowing and bulb planting day, wildflowers around the playground a year after planting.



Above: Windsor Drive roundabout, with ground prep by CUDS (Clean Up Devizes) squad and after in its full glory.

Once you have decided your conditions, seed producers have a range of mixes to choose from.

Some of Paul's mixes have wonderful descriptive names and include Bee Border, Ladybird Heaven, Water's Edge and Under the Wall. Tree Foot is made up of species that grow well in difficult soils and dappled shade – this mixture gives excellent ground cover providing an alternative to weeding around the base of trees. Extra Short is ideal for small spaces and will provide lots of flowers for pollinators even if your soil is impoverished. Short and Sweet is perfect for planting in borders around shrubs and rose bushes. It prevents soil erosion, looks better than plastic weed-suppressant sheets and its fragrant blooms attract large numbers of beneficial insects to boost natural aphid control.

Stuff to do in January

- Wiltshire Council is trying to improve the natural environment. Get them to do more. To nominate areas for wildflower spaces or rewilding, speak to your local town or parish council. Find it here: <https://bit.ly/wl2301rewild4>. For details of Wild About Wiltshire, grass cutting and wildflower areas: <https://bit.ly/wl2301rewild3>
- Cut back ornamental grasses before the new growth starts.
- Enjoy a grand tidy up, sweep the entrance and chuck out broken kit.
- Mulching your borders will improve soil structure and help reduce weeds and watering in the summer. Or clear them of weeds now and sow the ground with one of Paul's special border mixes in March.

Meanwhile, the ground needs to be cleared of turf and rotovated (cut away turf and dig small patches with a spade, or hire a turf stripper and a heavy duty rotovator for this). Please, no poisons. Plants take up about 5% of the poison... which means that 95% is left in the soil, no matter how inert the label says it is. Avoid the temptation to simply rotovate the grass; it comes back stronger than ever and will take over your wildflower meadow.

Waste nothing – stripped turf can be composted or laid grass-side-down at the edge with some of your seed mix sown into the top. Then scatter your seed evenly, about 7g per square meter of soil – Paul used to measure this precisely, but these days he just lays out some pebbles as a rough guide – and simply tread them in.

It is important to water your seeds regularly for the first three weeks depending on rainfall: if it is dry, every day or every other day. If docks come up, pull them up – easy when they are young. If nettles come up, ditto, but keep in mind that many butterflies need a patch for their caterpillars. If thistles come up, remember they are fabulous nectar providers. If you don't want them to take over next year, simply dead head them before they set seed. Then sit back and enjoy.

When the flowers are over and the seeds are dry and ready to drop, scythe, cut with shears or mow on a high setting, and leave everything where it lies for about seven days to let the last of the seeds drop, and for the grass to dry out so that it is light and easy to collect. WL

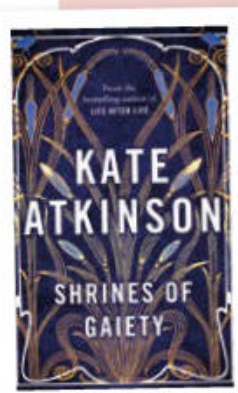
- *Sophie Butcher is the beekeeping garden designer based in Chippenham. www.hithergardendesigns.co.uk*
- *Paul Jupp has some excellent How-to videos on his website and seed mixes for every type of soil and setting. www.meadowinmygarden.co.uk*



While away the winter

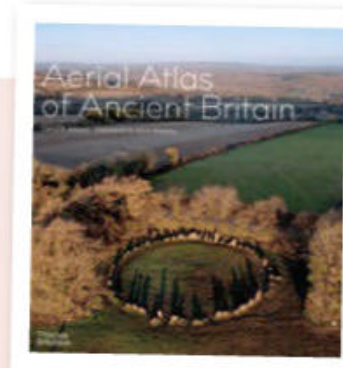
When it is cold outside why not batten down the hatches, find a comfy sofa, switch off the television, and settle down with a good book. Angus MacLennan, from The White Horse Bookshop in Marlborough, has selected the following – something for all the family, even an exciting new board game.

Shrines of Gaiety by Kate Atkinson



At the heart of this glittering world is notorious Nellie Coker, ruthless but also ambitious to advance her six children, including the enigmatic eldest, Niven whose character has been forged in the crucible of the Somme. But success breeds enemies, and Nellie's empire faces threats from without and within. For beneath the dazzle of Soho's gaiety, there is a dark underbelly, a world in which it is all too easy to become lost.

Aerial Atlas of Ancient Britain by David R. Abram



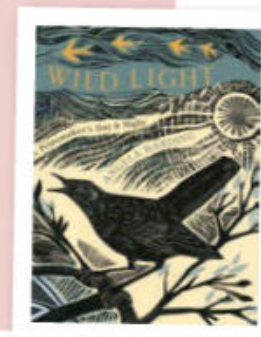
A spectacular collection of aerial photographs of Britain's most extraordinary prehistoric sites. This breathtaking collection reveals ancient monuments, as they have never been seen before: Neolithic enclosures, cairns and stone circles; Bronze Age villages, farmsteads, tombs and burial mounds; and Iron Age hillforts, all photographed in spectacular bird's-eye-view detail.

Country Church Monuments by C.B. Newham



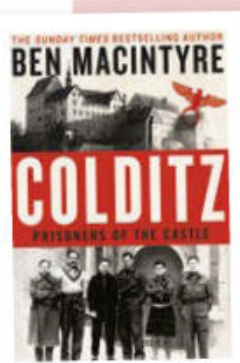
A landmark illustrated history of rural church monuments – the forgotten national treasures of England and Wales. Newham has visited, photographed, and catalogued more than 8,000 of these monumental sculptures. Many commemorate famous historical figures, but more moving are the minor aristocrats, small-time industrialists, much-loved mothers, fathers and children – who, if not for their memorials, would wholly be lost to time.

Wild Light: A Printmaker's day and night by Angela Harding



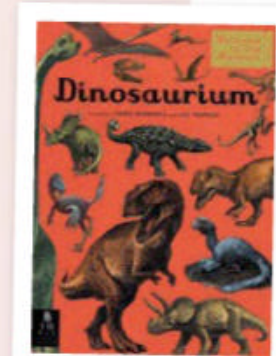
With more than 70 original illustrations, printmaker Angela Harding invites you to look at how the light changes the world around us, and how that changes us in its turn. "This book is a collection of illustrations from those moments when I have stopped and looked; when a particular encounter with nature has been highlighted by the time of day or the time of night."

Colditz: Prisoners of the Castle Activity by Ben MacIntyre



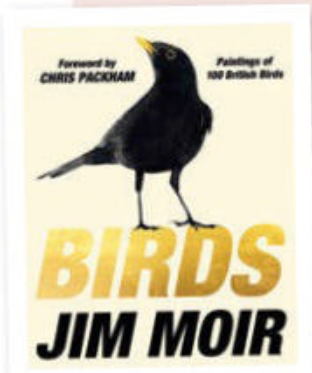
A tale of the indomitable human spirit, but also one of snobbery, class conflict, homosexuality, bullying, espionage, boredom, insanity and farce. With access to an astonishing range of material, MacIntyre reveals a remarkable cast of characters of multiple nationalities hitherto hidden from history, he shares their stories of courage, resilience and desperate attempts to escape.

Dinosaurium by Chris Wormell and Lily Murray



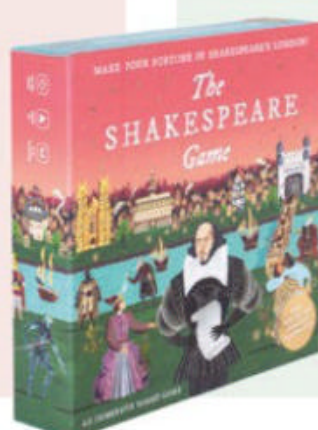
A stunningly curated guide to dinosaurs, featuring a comprehensive collection, from the legendary T.rex and Triceratops to lesser-known species such as Coelophysis and Tsintaosaurus. With artwork from Chris Wormell, accompanied by expertly written text, step inside the pages of this beautiful book to discover galleries of dinosaurs.

Birds by Jim Moir



Jim Moir loves birds. His popularity as a painter has soared in recent years and the simplicity and sincerity of his bird paintings have given them cult status among his fans. Now, for the first time, one hundred of these beautiful paintings are gathered together in this exquisite book.

The Shakespeare Game



Journey from Stratford to London in the footsteps of Shakespeare, collect characters and race round London's theatres to put on as many plays as you can before other playwrights steal your ideas, burn down your theatres or spread the plague! In this fun family board game, you will absorb details of Elizabethan England as well as learn loads of references to Shakespeare's plays. The winner is the player whose plays take the most money at the box office.

It's going to be a long hard winter

Cost of Living Crisis Appeal 2022

Help us support local people who
will be facing immense hardship

Many people across Wiltshire and Swindon are in for an anxious, challenging winter in the face of escalating rent, food and energy prices – forcing them to skip meals to feed their children or go without heating.

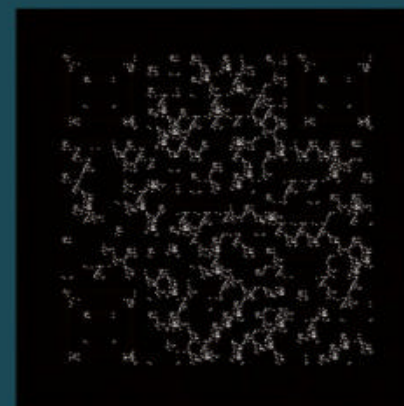
In response to this Wiltshire Community Foundation has launched a Cost of Living Crisis Appeal to support grassroots groups and charities helping families and individuals – whether that be through food, money advice, assistance with fuel bills or providing somewhere warm for them to go. But we need your support to do this.

We know there is additional pressure on all our finances this year but if you are in a position to be able to pass on some of your Winter Fuel Allowance, Energy Bill Support Grant or just wish to donate we

can redirect it to where it is needed most, helping to support vulnerable local people at a time of crisis.

You can donate by calling 01380 738989, using the QR code below or at localgiving.org/appeal/CostofLiving/

We will be hugely appreciative of any amount you feel able to give – thank you.





THE SPIRIT OF SAILING

Designed to withstand the demands of the open seas. The Yacht-Master is an emblematic nautical timepiece that combines elegance and performance. Its bidirectional bezel is used to calculate sailing time between two points, and its waterproof Oyster case protects the movement in the most extreme conditions. The range includes models fitted with the innovative Oysterflex bracelet, ensuring comfort and reliability. Highly legible and embodying the Rolex sailing tradition, it exemplifies the precision required to navigate the ocean and its challenges. **The Yacht-Master.**

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